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Let's Bake

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PRETTY & SIMPLE DECORATING

SO FUN! ALL-NEW STUFFED COOKIES

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IT'S *cookie* TIME!

COOKIE KITS
FOR DIY DECORATING
P. 38

ON THE COVER
Chocolate Chai Cookies, *p. 29*
Red and Green Pinwheels, *p. 18*
Sugar Plums, *p. 9*
Almond Butter Shortbread, *p. 92*

6
SPRITZ WREATHS
A vintage cookie gets a fresh new look.

8
NO OVEN NEEDED
Make five new no-bakes in no time.

14
SPIRAL EFFECT
Roll up some new swirled flavor combos.

20
REBUILT AS BARS
Classic desserts inspired these easy-to-make bars.

26
MUG BUDDIES
Cookies and hot drinks are BFFs.

30
JOY IN A JAR
Choose from three crafty jar designs to gift crunchy biscotti.

34
COOKIES TO SAVOR
Savory flavors give cookies a turn on the charcuterie board.

38
THE TOTAL PACKAGE
Give the gift of cookie kits—cutouts, icing, and sprinkles—for DIY decorating.

42
CROSS-COUNTRY COOKIES
Take a trip across the nation with regionally inspired cookies and bars.

60
NORDIC SIMPLICITY
Crisp cookies get minimalist decorating.

64
GOING TO EXTREMES
These huge stuffed cookies take it to the next level.

70
DOUGH MANY WAYS
Turn a basic dough into your own customizable treats.

74
FLAVORS OF MEXICO
Try *galletas* with warm spices and even chiles.

80
JUST ADD JAVA
Give your cookies a kick of caffeine.

86
FOUR-SQUARE DECORATING
Decorate a set of square cookies in one theme for a sweet surprise.

90
BEYOND PEANUT BUTTER
Assorted nut butters bring big flavor to these holiday goodies.

95
INDEX

96
COOKIE BASICS

Cook a Cozy Sunday Supper | Master Spanish Paella | Make Your Own Pesto
fine Cooking
INSPIRATION FOR PASSIONATE COOKS
Easy WEEKNIGHT MEALS
63 Recipes to Ignite Your Taste Buds
BRAISE AND PAN-SEAR LIKE A PRO
Coconut-Curry Ribs
New Takes with Fresh Herbs
Filet Mignon with Fresh Blueberry Sauce p. 47
50+ Cool & Easy Dishes
#210211
Pure Maple Desserts
50+ Recipes for Celebrating the Season
Eggnog Baked Alaska p. 24
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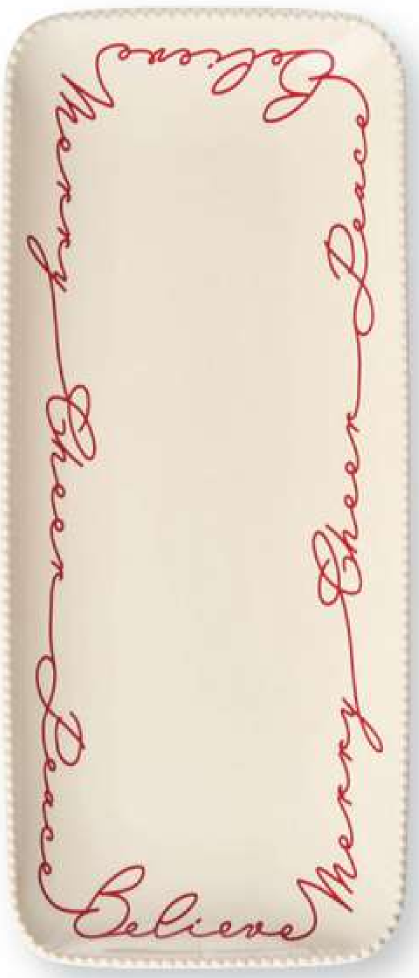

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Spritz WREATHS

SPRITZ MAY BE VINTAGE BUT THEY'LL NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE. GIVE THE CLASSIC A NEW LOOK AS LACY COOKIE WREATHS FOR GIFTING AND DECORATING.

ADD FLAVOR!
Add one of the following with the eggs when making dough:

¼ tsp. almond extract

¼ tsp. peppermint extract

1 tsp. orange or lemon zest

1 Tbsp. desired liqueur (such as almond, hazelnut, Irish cream, or limoncello)

AVOID CHILLING SPRITZ DOUGH. WHEN COLD, IT'S TOO FIRM TO FORCE THROUGH THE PRESS.

RICH BUTTER Spritz WREATHS

PREP 30 minutes **CHILL** 15 minutes
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

1½	**cups butter, softened**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
1	**tsp. baking powder**
1	**egg**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
3½	**cups all-purpose flour**
	Desired color gel food coloring (optional)
	Powdered Sugar Icing (optional)
	Small candies and/or sprinkles (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar and baking powder. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour. Divide dough into thirds. If desired, tint one or more portions of dough with gel food coloring.

2. Force unchilled dough through a cookie press onto ungreased cookie sheets. If desired, change plate with each portion of dough. Chill at least 15 minutes or until dough shapes are firm.

3. Trace ten 4-inch circles on two pieces of parchment paper; turn paper marked sides down. Using a thin metal spatula, carefully remove chilled dough shapes from cookie sheets and, working quickly, arrange in wreath shapes using marked parchment paper as a guide. Overlap dough shapes slightly and alternate colors (if using). You will need seven to nine dough shapes per wreath. Transfer parchment paper to cookie sheets.

4. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are firm. Cool on cookie sheets. Decorate wreaths with, if using, Powdered Sugar Icing and desired candies. **Makes 10 wreaths.**

PER WREATH *538 cal., 29 g fat (18 g sat. fat), 92 mg chol., 277 mg sodium, 66 g carb., 1 g fiber, 32 g sugars, 5 g pro.*

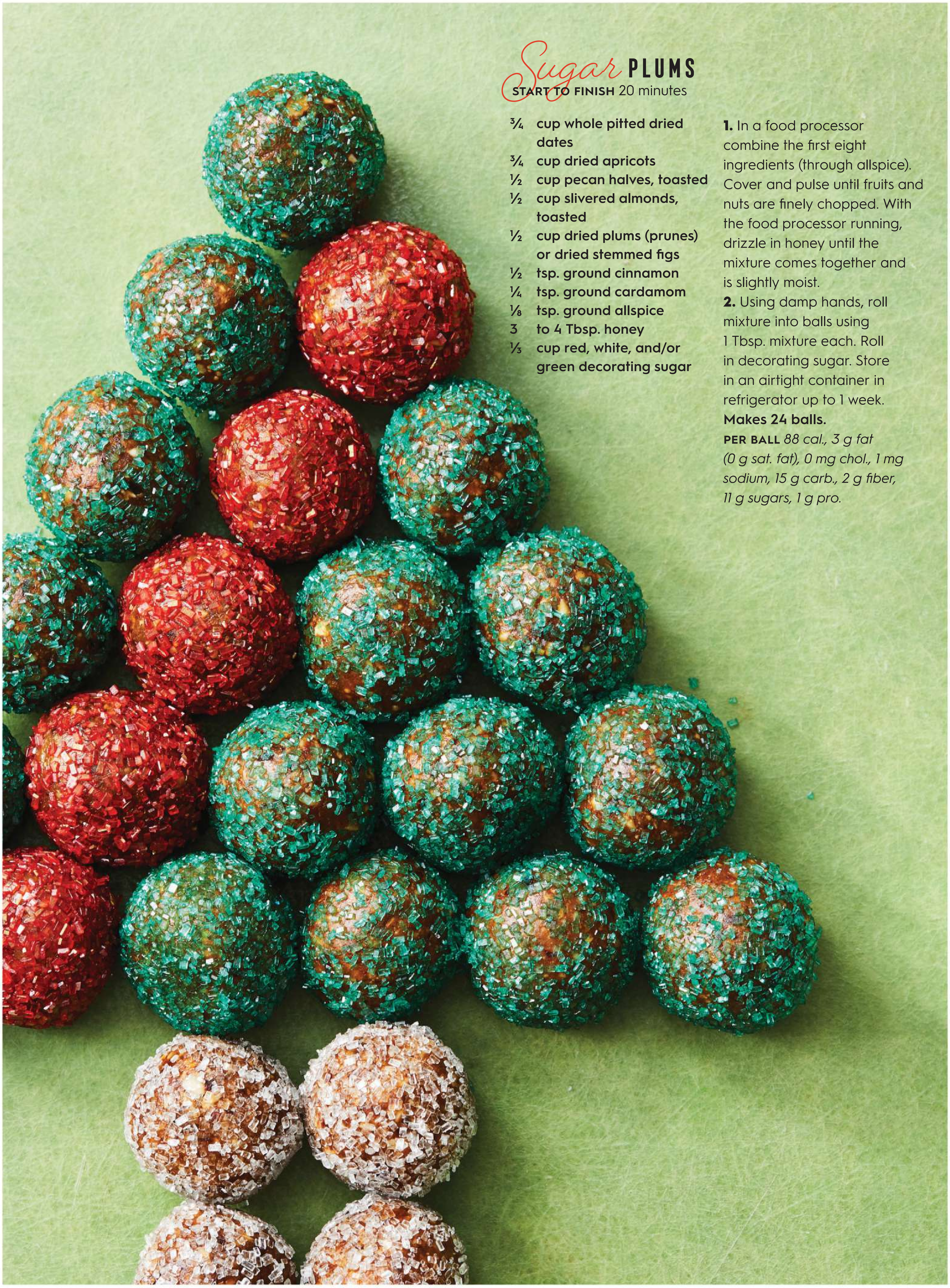
POWDERED SUGAR ICING

In a small bowl stir together 1½ cups powdered sugar, 4 tsp. milk, and ¼ tsp. vanilla or almond extract. If needed, stir in additional milk, 1 tsp. at a time, to reach desired consistency. Makes ½ cup.

CAKE BATTER
PUPPY CHOW BARS,
P. 10

NO *Oven* NEEDED

MAKE YOUR COOKIE TRAY SPECIAL AND SAVE SOME TIME! THESE NO-BAKE BARS AND TREATS TAKE LESS THAN 30 MINUTES TO PREPARE.



Sugar PLUMS

START TO FINISH 20 minutes

- ¾ cup whole pitted dried dates
- ¾ cup dried apricots
- ½ cup pecan halves, toasted
- ½ cup slivered almonds, toasted
- ½ cup dried plums (prunes) or dried stemmed figs
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground cardamom
- ⅛ tsp. ground allspice
- 3 to 4 Tbsp. honey
- ⅓ cup red, white, and/or green decorating sugar

1. In a food processor combine the first eight ingredients (through allspice). Cover and pulse until fruits and nuts are finely chopped. With the food processor running, drizzle in honey until the mixture comes together and is slightly moist.

2. Using damp hands, roll mixture into balls using 1 Tbsp. mixture each. Roll in decorating sugar. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 1 week. **Makes 24 balls.**

PER BALL *88 cal., 3 g fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 1 mg sodium, 15 g carb., 2 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

CAKE BATTER PUPPY CHOW *Bars*

Pictured on *p. 8.*

PREP 20 minutes

STAND 1 hour

	Nonstick cooking spray
8	**oz. vanilla-flavor candy coating (almond bark), chopped**
¼	**cup butter, cut up**
1	**10-oz. pkg. tiny marshmallows**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
½	**tsp. almond extract**
7	**cups bite-size original or vanilla-flavor rice square cereal**
½	**cup rainbow nonpareil sprinkles**
⅓	**cup powdered sugar**

1. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Coat foil with cooking spray.

2. In a 4- to 6-qt. Dutch oven melt almond bark and butter over medium-low, stirring constantly. Add marshmallows, vanilla, and almond extract. Cook and stir until marshmallows melt and mixture is smooth. Remove from heat. Add cereal and sprinkles; fold until evenly coated. Pour cereal mixture into prepared pan; press evenly with the back of a greased spoon. Let stand at least 1 hour.

3. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. Store in refrigerator in an airtight container up to 3 days. Just before serving, place powdered sugar in a large resealable plastic bag. Add bars, a few at a time, to bag; seal and shake to coat with powdered sugar.

Makes 24 bars.

PER BAR *162 cal., 6 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 5 mg chol., 83 mg sodium, 24 g carb., 0 g fiber, 17 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

ENLIST THE HELP OF THE *little chefs in your home* TO MAKE THESE KID-FRIENDLY RECIPES.

BROWNED BUTTER *Cookie Dough* BARS

PREP 20 minutes **CHILL** 1 hour

Nonstick cooking spray
1 cup butter
1 cup packed brown sugar
½ cup granulated sugar
½ tsp. salt
⅓ cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla
2½ cups pasteurized all-purpose flour *(below)* or oat flour
1 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
1 4-oz. bar semisweet chocolate, chopped
2 Tbsp. heavy cream
2 tsp. light corn syrup
Sea salt flakes

1. Lightly coat a 13×9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. In a 10-inch skillet heat butter over medium 5 minutes or until butter turns golden brown. Immediately remove from heat. Pour into a large bowl; cool to room temperature.
2. Add both sugars and the ½ tsp. salt. Beat with a mixer until combined, 1 to 2 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in milk and vanilla. Beat in flour. Stir in chocolate chips.
3. Transfer dough to prepared pan and pat into an even layer. Cover and chill while preparing ganache.
4. For ganache, in a small saucepan combine chopped chocolate, cream, and corn syrup. Heat and stir over low until melted and smooth. Pour ganache over cookie dough; spread evenly. Sprinkle with sea salt. Chill 1 hour or until ganache is set. Cut into bars. Store in refrigerator in an airtight container up to 3 days. **Makes 24 bars.**

PER BAR *270 cal., 14 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 22 mg chol., 164 mg sodium, 36 g carb., 2 g fiber, 24 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

PASTEURIZING FLOUR

Baking raw flour kills any bacteria, making it safe to eat. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread flour in a shallow baking pan. Bake 5 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack.

MORE COOKIE DOUGH BARS

CHOCOLATE-CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DOUGH BARS

Prepare as directed, except stir in ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder with the flour before pasteurizing.

BLACK AND WHITE COOKIE DOUGH BARS

Prepare as directed, except omit chopped chocolate and stir in 2 cups chopped chocolate sandwich cookies with white or red filling.

CAKE BATTER COOKIE DOUGH BARS

Prepare as directed, except stir in ½ cup red and green sprinkles and increase vanilla to 1 Tbsp.

PEANUT BUTTER CUP COOKIE DOUGH BARS

Prepare as directed, except reduce butter to ¾ cup, beat in ¼ cup peanut butter with the butter, omit chocolate chips, and stir in 1 cup chopped chocolate-covered peanut butter cups.

MONSTER COOKIE DOUGH BARS

Prepare as directed, except stir in 2 cups rolled oats with the flour before pasteurizing. Increase milk to ½ cup, reduce chocolate chips to ½ cup, add ½ cup peanut butter chips, and stir in 1 cup red and green chocolate-covered milk chocolate candies.

S'mores POPCORN BALLS

PREP 25 minutes
STAND 30 minutes

¼	**cup butter**
1	**10-oz. pkg. tiny marshmallows**
½	**tsp. vanilla**
1	**3-oz. pkg. microwave kettle corn, prepared according to pkg. directions (8 cups popped)**
2	**cups honey graham cereal**
4	**oz. semisweet chocolate, melted**
	Colored nonpareil sprinkles (optional)

1. In an 8-qt. pot melt butter over medium-low. Add marshmallows; stir constantly until melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Add popcorn and cereal; fold until evenly coated. Let cool just until easy to handle.

2. With buttered hands, quickly shape popcorn mixture into ten 3-inch-diameter balls. Dip popcorn balls partially into melted chocolate. Sprinkle with nonpareil sprinkles (if using).

3. Place balls on a sheet of waxed paper or a silicone baking mat. Let stand until set. Store in an airtight container up to 3 days. **Makes 10 balls.**

PER BALL *249 cal., 10 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 13 mg chol., 129 mg sodium, 39 g carb., 2 g fiber, 23 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

POPCORN BALL POPS

Prepare recipe as directed through Step 1. With buttered hands, quickly shape popcorn mixture into about twenty 2-inch-diameter balls. Insert a lollipop stick into each ball. Dip half of each pop into the melted chocolate, then sprinkle with additional crushed honey graham cereal. Place on a sheet of waxed paper or a silicone baking mat; let stand until chocolate is set.

USE GEL FOOD COLORING INSTEAD OF LIQUID FOOD COLORING *for the most vibrant color.*

CANDY CANE SWIRL Fudge

PREP 15 minutes
CHILL 2 hours

2	**12-oz. pkg. white baking chips (4 cups)**
1	**14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk (1⅓ cups)**
½	**tsp. peppermint extract**
	Red gel food coloring
	Crushed candy canes or peppermint candies (optional)

1. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Butter foil.

2. In a heavy medium saucepan combine 1 pkg. of the white baking chips and ⅔ cup of the sweetened condensed milk. Heat and stir over medium-low just until melted and smooth. In a second saucepan, repeat with the remaining pkg. white baking chips and ⅔ cup sweetened condensed milk. Stir peppermint extract and food coloring into one of the mixtures until bright red. Remove both mixtures from heat.

3. Alternate adding spoonfuls of red and white mixtures to prepared pan. Spread mixtures evenly; using a butter knife, swirl mixtures together until marbled. Sprinkle with crushed candies (if using). Cover and chill about 2 hours or until firm. Use foil to lift out uncut fudge. Cut into pieces. Store in refrigerator in an airtight container up to 1 week. **Makes 36 pieces.**

PER PIECE *130 cal., 7 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 41 mg sodium, 17 g carb., 0 g fiber, 17 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

Spiral Effect

RED AND GREEN PINWHEELS P. 18

LEARN HOW TO CREATE PERFECT SPIRAL COOKIES. HOVER YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA OVER THIS CODE TO GET THE LINK.

POTICA
is a Slovenian nut roll with layers of thin pastry and sweet filling.

WALNUT POTICA SPIRALS *P. 18*

THESE COOKIES WILL SPIN YOU RIGHT ROUND WITH NEW FLAVOR AND COLOR COMBOS. GIVE THEM A WHIRL FOR COOKIE GIFT BOXES AND DESSERT PLATTERS.

CHOCOLATE BABKA SPIRALS P. 18

ORANGE CREAM SPIRALS P. 18

FREEZE FOR LATER

Rolls can be frozen up to 3 months. If freezing, place wrapped rolls in resealable freezer bags. Thaw about 10 minutes or until soft enough to cut. Add 1 to 2 minutes to baking time.

RED AND GREEN *Pinwheels*

Pictured on *p. 14.*
PREP 30 minutes
CHILL 1 hour **FREEZE** 1 hour
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
⅓ cup freeze-dried raspberries, finely crushed
¼ cup green-color sprinkles
⅓ cup red- and green-color sprinkles (optional)

1. In a large mixing bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in as much flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.
2. Divide dough into thirds. Stir raspberry powder into one portion. Stir green sprinkles into one portion. Leave third portion plain. Wrap each portion in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll each dough portion into a 10×7-inch rectangle. Stack rectangles. Tightly roll up dough, starting from one of the long sides. Roll and stretch roll until 12 inches long. If you like, place red and green sprinkles on waxed paper. Coat roll in sprinkles. Wrap roll in plastic wrap; freeze about 1 hour or until firm enough to slice.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut roll into ¼-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.
5. Bake about 10 minutes or until edges are firm and just starting to brown. Cool on cookie sheet 1 minute. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 32 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *128 cal., 7 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 82 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 0 g fiber, 8 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

WALNUT POTICA *Spirals*

Pictured on *p. 15.*
PREP 20 minutes
CHILL 1 hour **FREEZE** 1 hour
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. butter, softened
1 cup sugar
½ tsp. salt
1 egg
1 Tbsp. vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups walnut pieces, finely ground
2 Tbsp. honey
1 egg yolk
1 Tbsp. milk

1. In a large bowl beat 1 cup of the butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add ⅔ cup of the sugar and the salt. Beat on medium 2 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in 1 egg and the vanilla. Beat in flour.
2. Wrap in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
3. For filling, in a medium bowl stir together ground walnuts, the remaining ⅓ cup sugar and 2 Tbsp. butter, the honey, egg yolk, and milk.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 15×10-inch rectangle. Spread walnut filling over dough, leaving a ½-inch border around edges. Cut rectangle in half crosswise. Tightly roll up dough halves, starting from short sides; pinch to seal edges. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap; freeze about 1 hour or until firm enough to slice.
5. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut rolls into ¼-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.
6. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are light brown. Cool on cookie sheets 1 minute. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 40 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *120 cal., 8 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 23 mg chol., 73 mg sodium, 11 g carb., 0 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

CHOCOLATE BABKA *Spirals*

Pictured on *p. 16.*
PREP 25 minutes
CHILL 1 hour **FREEZE** 1 hour
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 375°F

1 cup butter, softened
⅔ cup granulated sugar
½ tsp. salt
1 egg
1 Tbsp. vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
3 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped
3 Tbsp. butter
½ cup chocolate cookie crumbs
1 Tbsp. honey

1. In a large bowl beat 1 cup butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar and salt. Beat on medium 2 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour. Wrap in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
2. For filling, in a small saucepan melt chocolate and 3 Tbsp. butter over medium-low, stirring until smooth. Let cool to room temperature. Stir in cookie crumbs and honey.
3. On a sheet of parchment paper, roll dough into a 15×10-inch rectangle. Spread chocolate filling over dough to within ½ inch of the long side that is farthest away from you. (If dough becomes soft, slide paper with dough onto a cookie sheet; freeze 10 minutes.) Cut rectangle in half crosswise. Tightly roll up dough halves, starting from filled sides; pinch to seal edges. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap; freeze 1 hour.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut rolls into ¼-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.
5. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are light brown. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 36 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *120 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 94 mg sodium, 12 g carb., 0 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

ORANGE CREAM *Spirals*

Pictured on *p. 17.*
PREP 20 minutes
CHILL 1 hour **FREEZE** 1 hour
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 375°F

½ cup butter, softened
½ of an 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. orange zest
Orange food coloring
½ cup very finely chopped white baking chocolate
¼ cup orange-color sugar

1. In a large bowl beat butter and cream cheese with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour as you can. Stir in any remaining flour.
2. Divide dough in half. Stir orange zest and orange food coloring into one portion. Stir white chocolate into second portion. Wrap in plastic wrap. Chill 1 hour.
3. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion of dough into a 12×8-inch rectangle. Stack orange rectangle on top of white rectangle. Tightly roll up dough, starting from a long side. Place sprinkles on waxed paper. Roll dough in sprinkles to coat, lightly brushing roll with water if necessary. Wrap roll in plastic wrap; freeze 1 hour.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut roll into ¼-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.
5. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until bottoms are lightly browned. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 36 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *101 cal., 5 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 16 mg chol., 63 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 0 g fiber, 7 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

PUMPKIN SPICE Spirals

PREP 25 minutes
CHILL 30 minutes
FREEZE 4 hours
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

½	**cup butter, softened**
¾	**cup granulated sugar**
2	**tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
½	**tsp. salt**
1	**cup canned pumpkin**
1	**egg**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
2¼	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup packed brown sugar**
1	**egg yolk**
1	**recipe Cream Cheese Icing**

1. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, 1 tsp. of the pumpkin pie spice, and the salt. Beat on medium 2 minutes, scraping sides of bowl. Beat in ½ cup of the pumpkin, 1 egg, and the vanilla. Beat in flour.

2. Wrap dough in plastic wrap; chill until easy to handle, 30 to 60 minutes. Meanwhile, for filling, in a small bowl combine the remaining ½ cup pumpkin, the brown sugar, egg yolk, and the remaining 1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice.

3. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to a 15×10-inch rectangle. Spread with pumpkin filling. Cut rectangle in half crosswise. Tightly roll up dough halves, starting from short sides; pinch to seal edges. Wrap rolls in plastic wrap; freeze about 4 hours or until firm enough to slice.

4. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Cut rolls into ¼-inch slices. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.

5. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are light brown. Cool on cookie sheets 1 minute. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Drizzle with Cream Cheese Icing. **Makes 40 cookies.**

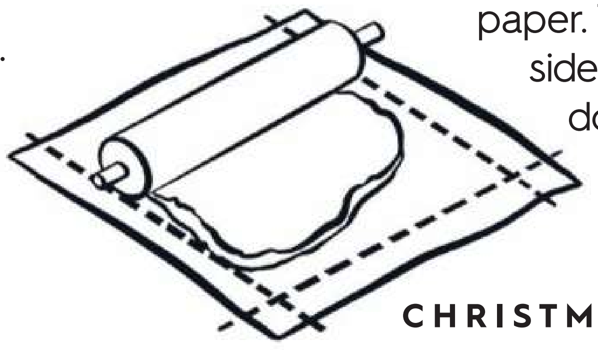
PER COOKIE *88 cal., 3 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 18 mg chol., 57 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 0 g fiber, 8 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

PUMPKIN SPICE SPIRALS

CREAM CHEESE ICING

In a medium bowl beat 2 oz. softened cream cheese and 1 Tbsp. softened butter with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in ¾ cup powdered sugar and enough milk (3 to 4 tsp.) to make drizzling consistency.

MAKE A TEMPLATE Make a guide for rolling out the dough by drawing the size rectangle you need on a piece of parchment paper. Turn paper marked side down and roll out dough on the paper.



REBUILT AS *Bars*

WE TOOK THE FLAVORS OF OUR FAVORITE SWEETS AND TREATS AND TURNED THEM INTO DECADENT BARS. THEY'RE EASIER THAN THE ORIGINALS TO MAKE, SERVE, AND DEVOUR.

CANNOLI BARS
P. 23

CINNAMON ROLL CHEESECAKE *Bars*

PREP 30 minutes
BAKE 50 minutes at 325°F
COOL 1 hour **CHILL** 2 hours

Nonstick cooking spray
2 cups finely crushed cinnamon graham crackers
⅔ cup butter, melted
1 cup granulated sugar
2 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
2 eggs
½ cup sour cream
2 tsp. vanilla
½ cup packed brown sugar
2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil, extending the foil over edges. Coat foil with cooking spray.
2. In a medium bowl combine graham cracker crumbs, ⅓ cup of the melted butter, and ¼ cup of the granulated sugar until well mixed. Press mixture evenly into the prepared pan. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until set and golden brown.
3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl beat cream cheese and the remaining ¾ cup sugar with a mixer on medium to high about 1 minute or until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, until well mixed. Beat in sour cream and vanilla until smooth.
4. In a small bowl combine the remaining ⅓ cup melted butter, the brown sugar, and cinnamon. Stir in 3 Tbsp. of the cream cheese mixture until smooth.
5. Spread half of the remaining cream cheese mixture over the prepared crust. Top with half of the cinnamon mixture. Using a butter knife or small metal spatula, swirl cinnamon mixture into cheesecake layer. Top with remaining cream cheese and cinnamon mixtures, swirling together again.
6. Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until edges are puffed and center is nearly set. Cool in pan on a wire rack 1 hour. Cover and chill at least 2 hours. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars.
Makes 16 bars.

PER BAR *355 cal., 24 g fat (14 g sat. fat), 86 mg chol., 261 mg sodium, 32 g carb., 1 g fiber, 24 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

CASHEW BLOSSOM Bars

PREP 20 minutes **BAKE** 22 minutes at 350°F

1¾	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. salt**
½	**cup butter, softened**
½	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**cup packed brown sugar**
2	**tsp. vanilla**
½	**cup cashew butter or peanut butter**
1	**egg**
2	**Tbsp. milk**
⅓	**cup chopped cashews**
16	**milk chocolate Kisses**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Grease foil.

2. In a small bowl combine flour, baking soda, and salt.

3. In a large bowl beat butter, both sugars, and vanilla with a mixer on high until smooth. Add cashew butter, egg, and milk. Beat on medium until smooth, scraping bowl as needed. Gradually add flour mixture, mixing just until incorporated and a dough forms. Stir in cashews.

4. Pat dough evenly in the prepared pan. Bake 22 to 24 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

5. Immediately press Kisses in rows on top of bars, spacing evenly. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars.

Makes 16 bars.

PER BAR *249 cal., 13 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 28 mg chol., 233 mg sodium, 30 g carb., 1 g fiber, 17 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

CANNOLI *Bars*

Pictured on *p. 20.*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 45 minutes at 350°F
CHILL 2 hours

1½ cups graham cracker crumbs
⅓ cup butter, melted
½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
1 8-oz. carton mascarpone cheese, at room temperature
½ of a 15-oz. carton whole milk ricotta cheese, at room temperature
2 eggs
2 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. orange zest
¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
⅔ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
Powdered sugar (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Grease foil.

2. In a medium bowl stir together graham cracker crumbs, butter, and 2 Tbsp. of the sugar. Press mixture evenly into bottom of prepared pan. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until set and golden brown.

3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl beat mascarpone, ricotta, and the remaining ½ cup sugar with a mixer on medium until combined. Beat in eggs, one at a time, until combined. Beat in vanilla, orange zest, and cinnamon.

4. Pour batter over baked crust, spreading evenly. Bake about 35 minutes or until edges are golden brown and the center is nearly set. Sprinkle with chocolate chips.

5. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving.

6. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Dust with powdered sugar (if using). Cut into bars. **Makes 16 bars.**

PER BAR *254 cal., 16 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 58 mg chol., 119 mg sodium, 24 g carb., 0 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

TRIPLE CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE *Bars*

PREP 50 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes at 325°F
COOL 30 minutes
CHILL 2 hours

24 chocolate sandwich cookies with white filling
⅓ cup butter, melted
½ cup butter, softened
1 4-serving-size pkg. chocolate instant pudding and pie filling mix
¾ cup heavy cream
3 cups powdered sugar
8 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
2 Tbsp. shortening
Grated bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (optional)

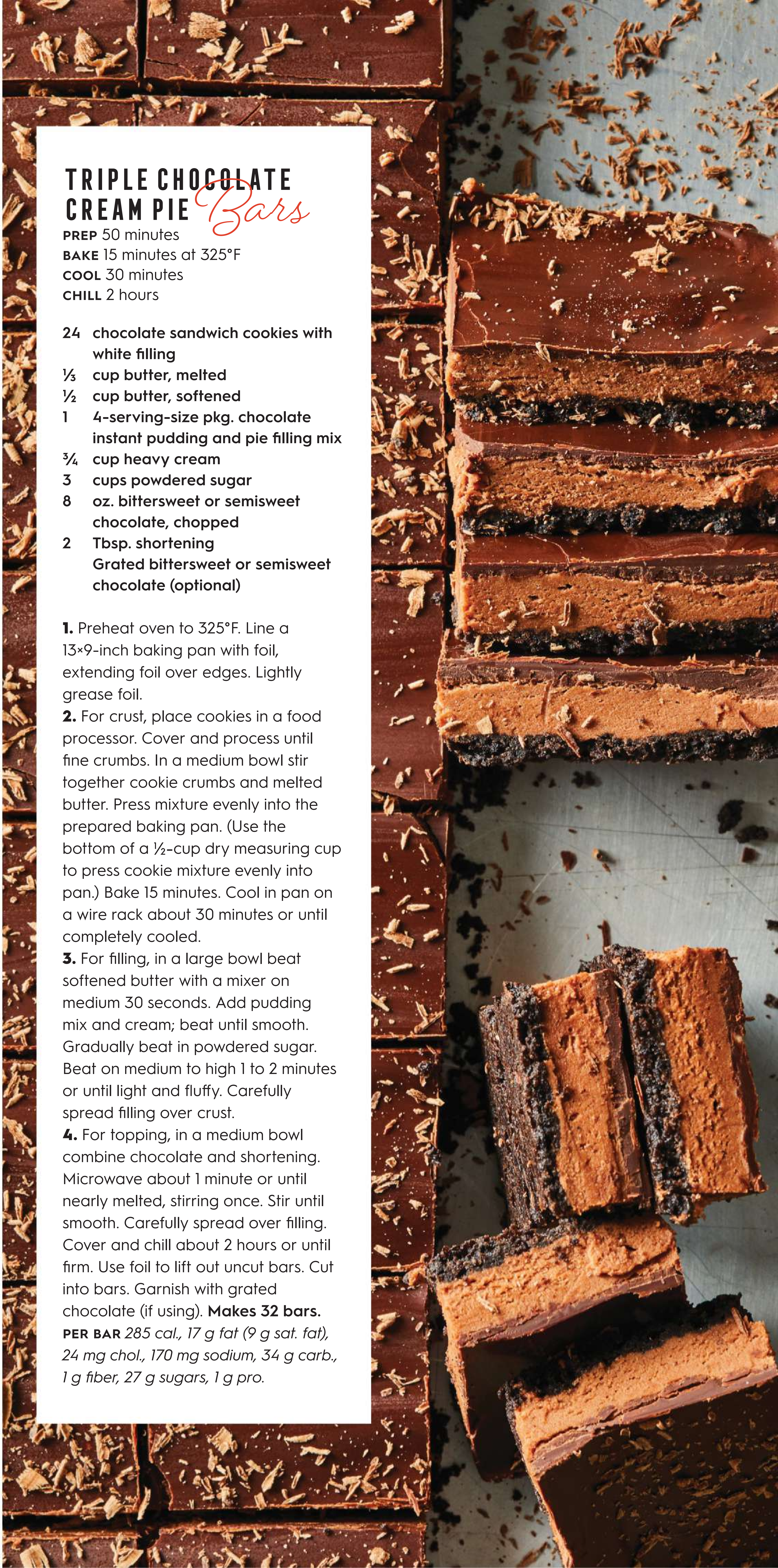
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Lightly grease foil.

2. For crust, place cookies in a food processor. Cover and process until fine crumbs. In a medium bowl stir together cookie crumbs and melted butter. Press mixture evenly into the prepared baking pan. (Use the bottom of a ½-cup dry measuring cup to press cookie mixture evenly into pan.) Bake 15 minutes. Cool in pan on a wire rack about 30 minutes or until completely cooled.

3. For filling, in a large bowl beat softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add pudding mix and cream; beat until smooth. Gradually beat in powdered sugar. Beat on medium to high 1 to 2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Carefully spread filling over crust.

4. For topping, in a medium bowl combine chocolate and shortening. Microwave about 1 minute or until nearly melted, stirring once. Stir until smooth. Carefully spread over filling. Cover and chill about 2 hours or until firm. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. Garnish with grated chocolate (if using). **Makes 32 bars.**

PER BAR *285 cal., 17 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 24 mg chol., 170 mg sodium, 34 g carb., 1 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 1 g pro.*



GINGERBREAD COOKIE *Bars*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 18 minutes at 350°F

	Nonstick cooking spray
4½	cups all-purpose flour
4	tsp. ground ginger
2	tsp. baking soda
1½	tsp. ground cinnamon
¼	tsp. salt
1½	cups shortening
2	cups granulated sugar
2	eggs
½	cup molasses
½	cup coarse granulated sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 15×10-inch baking pan with cooking spray or line with parchment paper. In a medium bowl stir together the next five ingredients (through salt).

2. In a large bowl beat shortening with a mixer on low 30 seconds. Gradually add the 2 cups granulated sugar. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and molasses. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Pat dough into the prepared pan. Sprinkle with coarse sugar.

3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until set and edges are beginning to turn golden. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cut into bars. **Makes 24 bars.**

PER BAR *310 cal., 13 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 16 mg chol., 139 mg sodium, 45 g carb., 1 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

DUTCH LETTER *Bars*

PREP 15 minutes
BAKE 35 minutes at 350°F

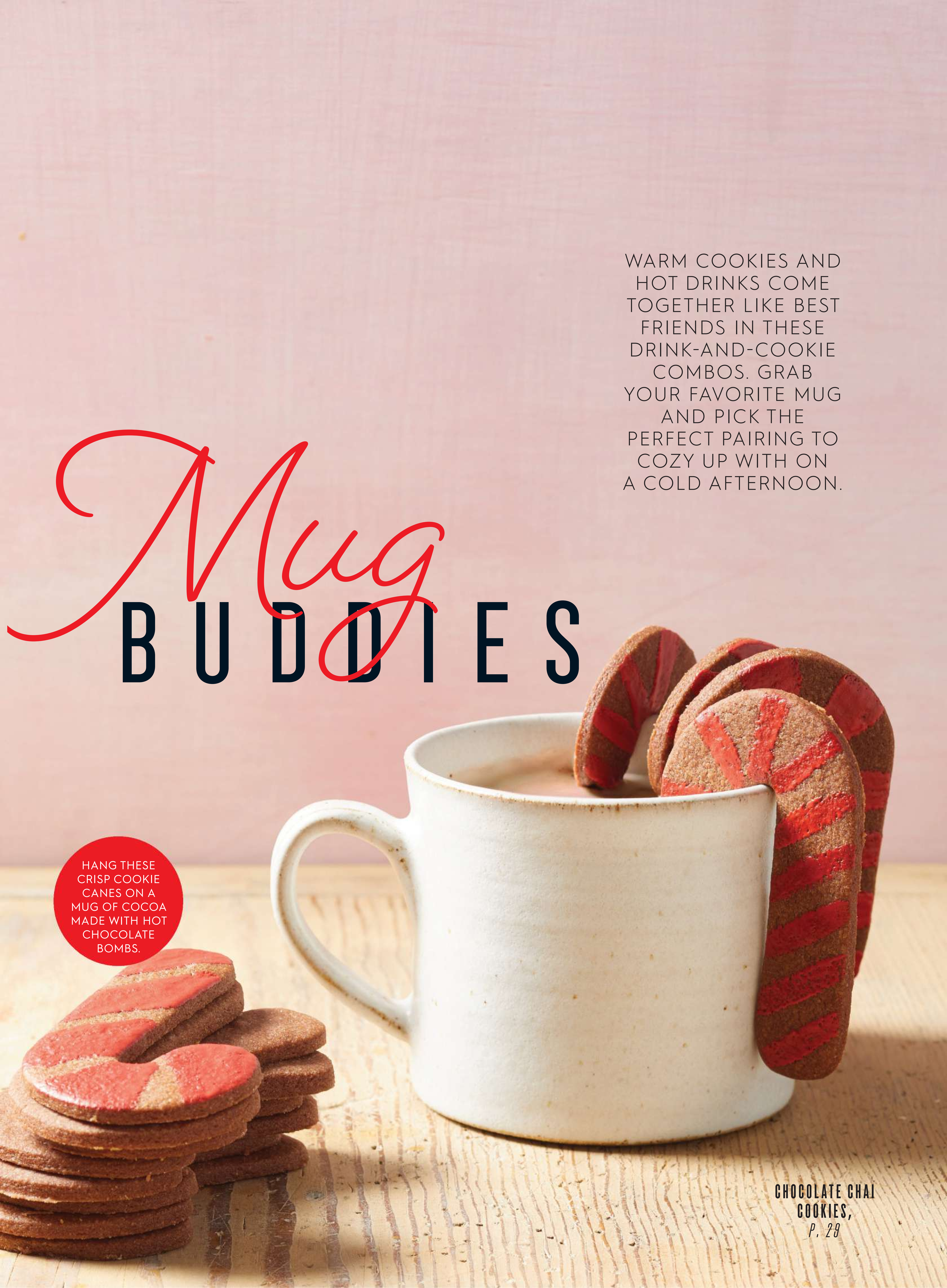
	Nonstick cooking spray
1	**cup butter, softened**
1	**8-oz. pkg. almond paste**
2	**eggs**
2	**cups granulated sugar**
2	**cups all-purpose flour**
½	**cup raspberry jam, melted**
½	**cup sliced almonds**
2	**tsp. coarse sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Coat foil with cooking spray.
2. In a large bowl beat butter, almond paste, and eggs with a mixer on medium until combined. Add granulated sugar; beat until light and fluffy. With the mixer on low, gradually beat in flour until combined.
3. Spread batter in prepared baking pan. Drizzle top with melted jam. Using a butter knife or small metal spatula, lightly swirl jam into the dough. Sprinkle with almonds and coarse sugar.
4. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until top is golden brown. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. **Makes 24 bars.**

PER BAR *251 cal., 12 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 36 mg chol., 70 mg sodium, 35 g carb., 1 g fiber, 24 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Mug BUDDIES

WARM COOKIES AND HOT DRINKS COME TOGETHER LIKE BEST FRIENDS IN THESE DRINK-AND-COOKIE COMBOS. GRAB YOUR FAVORITE MUG AND PICK THE PERFECT PAIRING TO COZY UP WITH ON A COLD AFTERNOON.

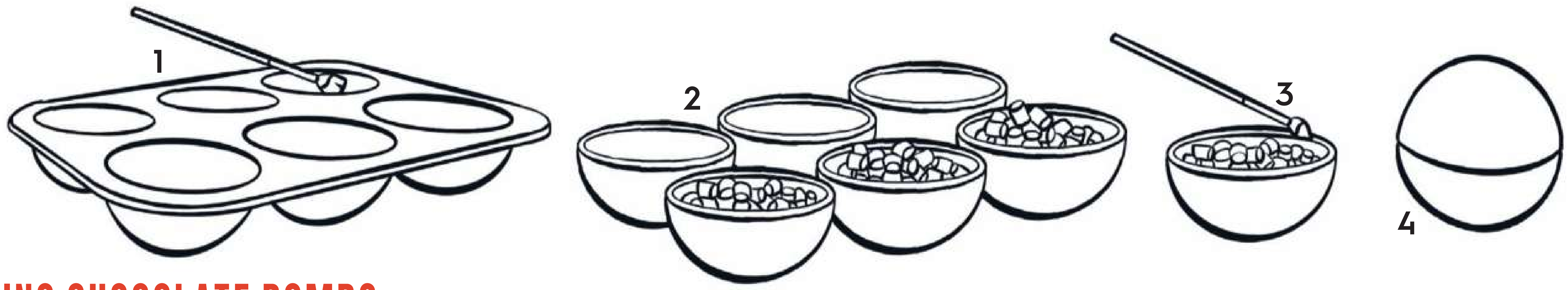


HANG THESE CRISP COOKIE CANES ON A MUG OF COCOA MADE WITH HOT CHOCOLATE BOMBS.

CHOCOLATE CHAI COOKIES,
P. 29

HOT CHOCOLATE BOMBS, *P. 29*

LEARN HOW TO MAKE COCOA BOMBS WITH OUR EASY-TO-FOLLOW VIDEO. HOVER YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA OVER THIS CODE TO GET THE LINK.



MAKING CHOCOLATE BOMBS **1.** Use a paintbrush to coat insides of bomb molds with melted chocolate. Go all the way to the top. **2.** When set, remove the shells from molds and fill half of the shells with marshmallow mixture. **3.** Brush the edges of filled shells with more melted chocolate. **4.** Top with unfilled shells and press to seal.

PUMPKIN Eggnog

PREP 20 minutes
CHILL 4 hours

- **3 cups heavy cream**
- **2½ cups milk**
- **12 egg yolks**
- **1⅓ cups sugar**
- **¾ cup canned pumpkin**
- **2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
- **2 Tbsp. vanilla**
- **Freshly grated nutmeg**

1. In a large saucepan combine 1 cup each of the cream and milk, the egg yolks, and sugar. Cook and stir over medium about 5 minutes or until mixture just coats a metal spoon; do not boil. Place pan in a large bowl of ice water about 5 minutes or until slightly cool, stirring constantly.

2. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a pitcher. Stir in the remaining 2 cups cream and 1½ cups milk, the pumpkin, pumpkin pie spice, and vanilla. Cover; chill 4 to 24 hours. Top servings with nutmeg. **Makes 8 servings.**

PER SERVING *574 cal., 41 g fat (24 g sat. fat), 384 mg chol., 74 mg sodium, 43 g carb., 1 g fiber, 41 g sugars, 9 g pro.*

PUMPKIN COOKIES WITH CANDIED PEPITAS

PUMPKIN EGGNOG

CANDIED PEPITAS

In a 6-inch heavy skillet heat 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar and ⅛ tsp. salt over medium-high, shaking skillet several times to heat sugar evenly (do not stir). Heat until some of the sugar is melted and syrupy. Stir only the melted sugar to keep it from overbrowning, stirring in remaining sugar as it melts. Reduce heat to low. Cook and stir until all sugar is melted and golden. Stir in 1 tsp. butter. Add ½ cup roasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas) to skillet, stirring to coat. Transfer to greased foil. While warm, use forks to separate mixture into clusters; cool.

PUMPKIN *Cookies* WITH CANDIED PEPITAS

PREP 30 minutes
CHILL 30 minutes
BAKE 13 minutes per batch at 350°F

3½	**cups all-purpose flour**
3	**tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. salt**
1½	**cups packed brown sugar**
½	**cup vegetable oil**
1	**egg**
1	**Tbsp. vanilla**
¾	**cup canned pumpkin**
½	**tsp. orange zest**
2	**8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
⅔	**cup powdered sugar**
1	**recipe Candied Pepitas *(opposite)***

1. In a medium bowl combine flour, 1 tsp. of the pumpkin pie spice, the baking soda, and salt. In a large bowl beat brown sugar, oil, egg, and vanilla with a mixer on medium to high until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in pumpkin and orange zest until combined. Beat in flour mixture. Divide dough in half.

2. Roll each portion of dough between two sheets of parchment paper to ⅛ inch thick. Transfer to baking sheets; chill 30 minutes.

3. Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove top sheet of parchment from dough. Using 2- to 2½-inch round cookie cutters, cut out dough. Place cutouts 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Reroll scraps once between sheets of parchment paper. Chill 30 minutes before cutting and baking.

4. Bake about 13 minutes or until edges are light brown. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

5. In a medium bowl beat cream cheese with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add powdered sugar and the remaining 2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice. Beat until light and fluffy. Spread frosting on cookies and top with Candied Pepitas. **Makes 48 cookies.**

PER SERVING *139 cal., 7 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 14 mg chol., 78 mg sodium, 17 g carb., 1 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

CHOCOLATE CHAI *Cookies*

Pictured on *p. 26.*

PREP 40 minutes **CHILL** 1 hour
BAKE 7 minutes per batch at 375°F

2	**cups all-purpose flour**
⅓	**cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
2	**Tbsp. instant chai tea mix**
1	**cup butter, softened**
1	**cup superfine sugar**
¼	**tsp. salt**
1	**oz. unsweetened chocolate, melted and cooled**
1	**egg**
1	**egg yolk**
2	**tsp. vanilla**
	Royal Icing (recipe, *p. 63*)

1. In a medium bowl stir together flour, cocoa powder, and chai tea mix. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in melted chocolate. Beat in egg, egg yolk, and vanilla. Add flour mixture; beat in until just combined. Divide the dough in half. Cover and chill 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough at a time to ⅛ inch thick. Using a 3- to 3½-inch candy cane cookie cutter, cut out dough. (If necessary, dip cutters in flour to prevent sticking.) Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Make sure the crooks in the candy canes are wide enough to fit over a mug rim. Reroll scraps once.

3. Bake about 7 minutes or until edges are firm. If necessary, open crooks in candy canes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Decorate as desired with Royal Icing. **Makes 42 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *136 cal., 5 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 20 mg chol., 52 mg sodium, 22 g carb., 1 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

DIY SUPERFINE SUGAR.
PROCESS 1 CUP GRANULATED SUGAR IN A FOOD PROCESSOR 30 SECONDS.

HOT CHOCOLATE *Bombs*

Pictured on *p. 27.*

PREP 25 minutes **FREEZE** 5 minutes

1	**to 2 Tbsp. instant hot chocolate mix**
1	**to 2 Tbsp. marshmallow bits**
1	**to 2 Tbsp. mini chocolate chips or mint-chocolate chips**
4	**oz. semisweet or dark chocolate, chopped**
	Melted white baking chocolate and/or sprinkles (optional)
48	**oz. hot chocolate or milk**

1. In a small bowl combine hot chocolate mix, marshmallow bits, and chocolate chips.

2. Place 3 oz. of the chopped chocolate in a small bowl. Microwave 60 seconds or until melted, stirring every 15 seconds. The temperature of the melted chocolate should be 113°F. If necessary, microwave at 5- to 10-second intervals or until a thermometer registers 113°F. Add the remaining 1 oz. chopped chocolate. Stir vigorously about 2 minutes or until completely smooth. If small pieces of chocolate remain, microwave at 5-second intervals, stirring until smooth. The chocolate temperature should be 88°F.

3. Use a small, clean paintbrush to brush chocolate inside 1- or 2½-inch shallow silicone half-moon chocolate molds, creating a thick enough layer to coat sides completely.* Freeze 5 minutes.

4. Fill half of the chocolate shells with 1 to 2 Tbsp. marshmallow mixture. Carefully loosen and pop the remaining half of the chocolate shells from the molds. To assemble each chocolate bomb, brush edge of a filled chocolate shell (still in the mold) with some of the remaining melted chocolate; gently press edge of unfilled chocolate shell into the melted chocolate to seal. Chill 2 to 3 minutes or until set. Carefully loosen and pop the assembled bombs from the molds.

5. If you like, decorate assembled bombs. Place melted white chocolate in a resealable plastic bag. Snip a small hole in one corner and drizzle over seams in bombs. Add sprinkles. Freeze 5 minutes. Transfer bombs to a storage container. Store at room temperature up to 2 weeks.

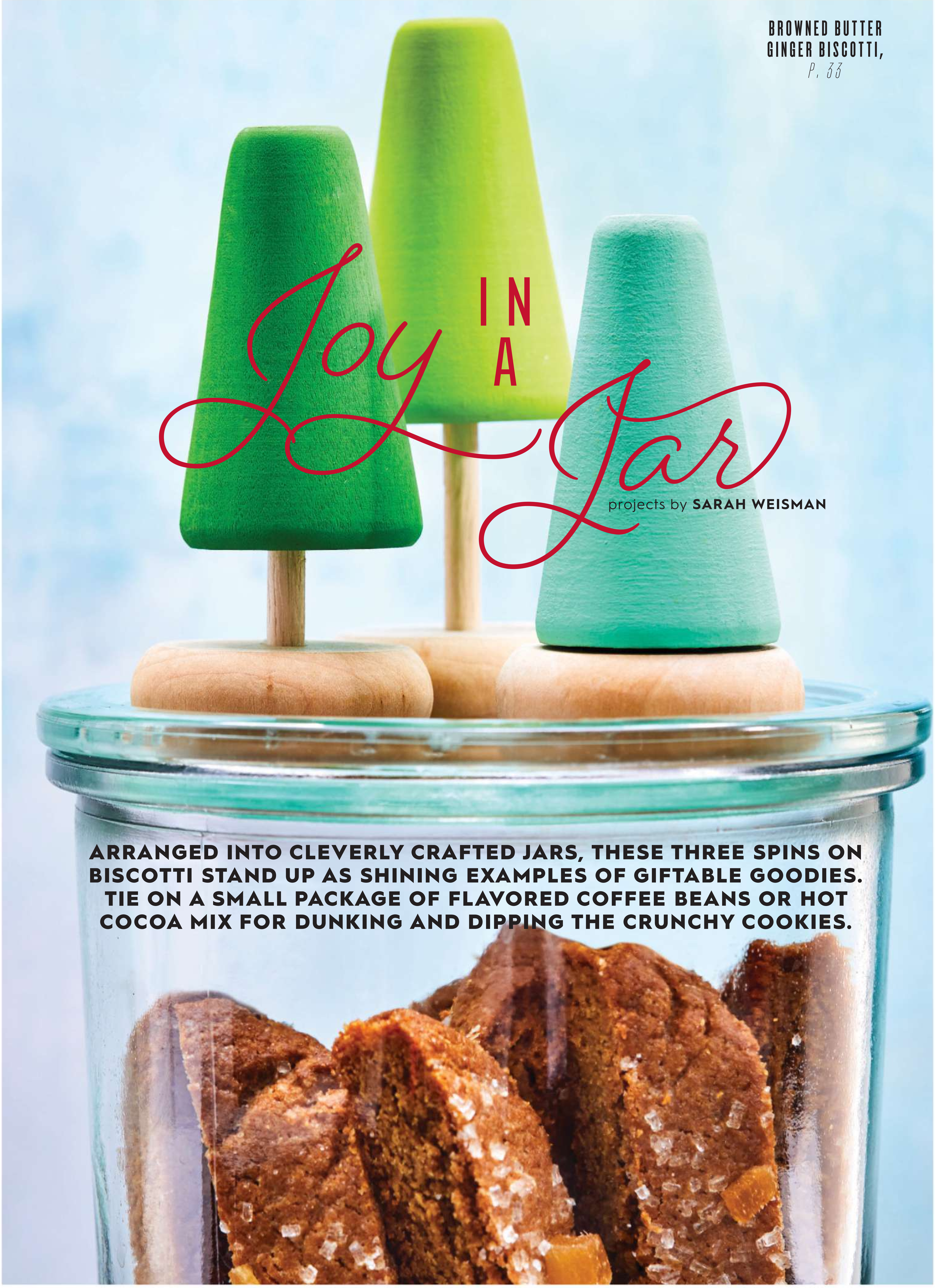
6. To serve, place one bomb in a small mug for small bombs and a large mug for large bombs. Slowly pour 4 to 6 oz. heated hot chocolate or milk over the bomb; stir. **Makes 12 small bombs or 3 large bombs.**

***TIP** The chocolate will set quickly in the molds. It's OK to go back and paint over the chocolate that has set to ensure the molds are completely covered. Make a few at a time to see what amount of chocolate works best with your mold. Or brush a layer of chocolate, chill, and brush again.

PER SMALL BOMB *161 cal., 9 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 8 mg chol., 59 mg sodium, 21 g carb., 1 g fiber, 17 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

Joy IN A Jar

projects by **SARAH WEISMAN**



BROWNED BUTTER GINGER BISCOTTI,
P. 33

ARRANGED INTO CLEVERLY CRAFTED JARS, THESE THREE SPINS ON BISCOTTI STAND UP AS SHINING EXAMPLES OF GIFTABLE GOODIES. TIE ON A SMALL PACKAGE OF FLAVORED COFFEE BEANS OR HOT COCOA MIX FOR DUNKING AND DIPPING THE CRUNCHY COOKIES.

TREE TOPPER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- WIDE-MOUTH JAR
- 2-INCH WOOD CONES
- $\frac{3}{16}$-INCH WOOD DOWELS
- 1.5-INCH WOOD WHEELS
- CRAFTS PAINT & PAINTBRUSH
- SANDPAPER
- WOOD GLUE
- HOT-GLUE GUN & GLUE STICKS

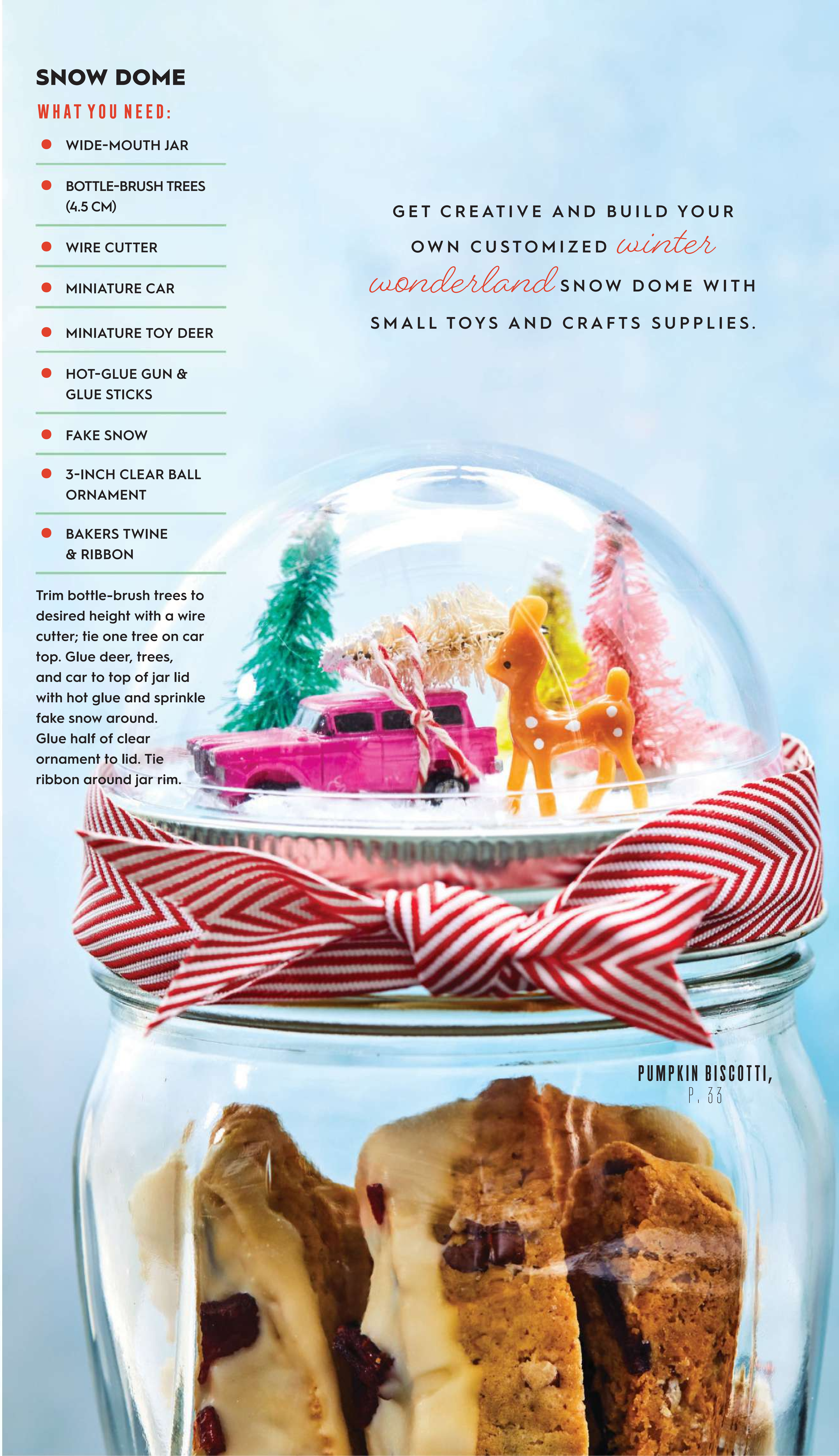
Place cone on the end of a long dowel and paint with two coats of crafts paint; let dry. Repeat for other colors. Trim dowel to desired length and sand the ends. Add wood glue to the inside of a wheel and insert dowel. Add wood glue to dowel and insert a painted wood cone; let dry. Use hot glue to attach trees to top of jar lid.

SNOW DOME

WHAT YOU NEED:

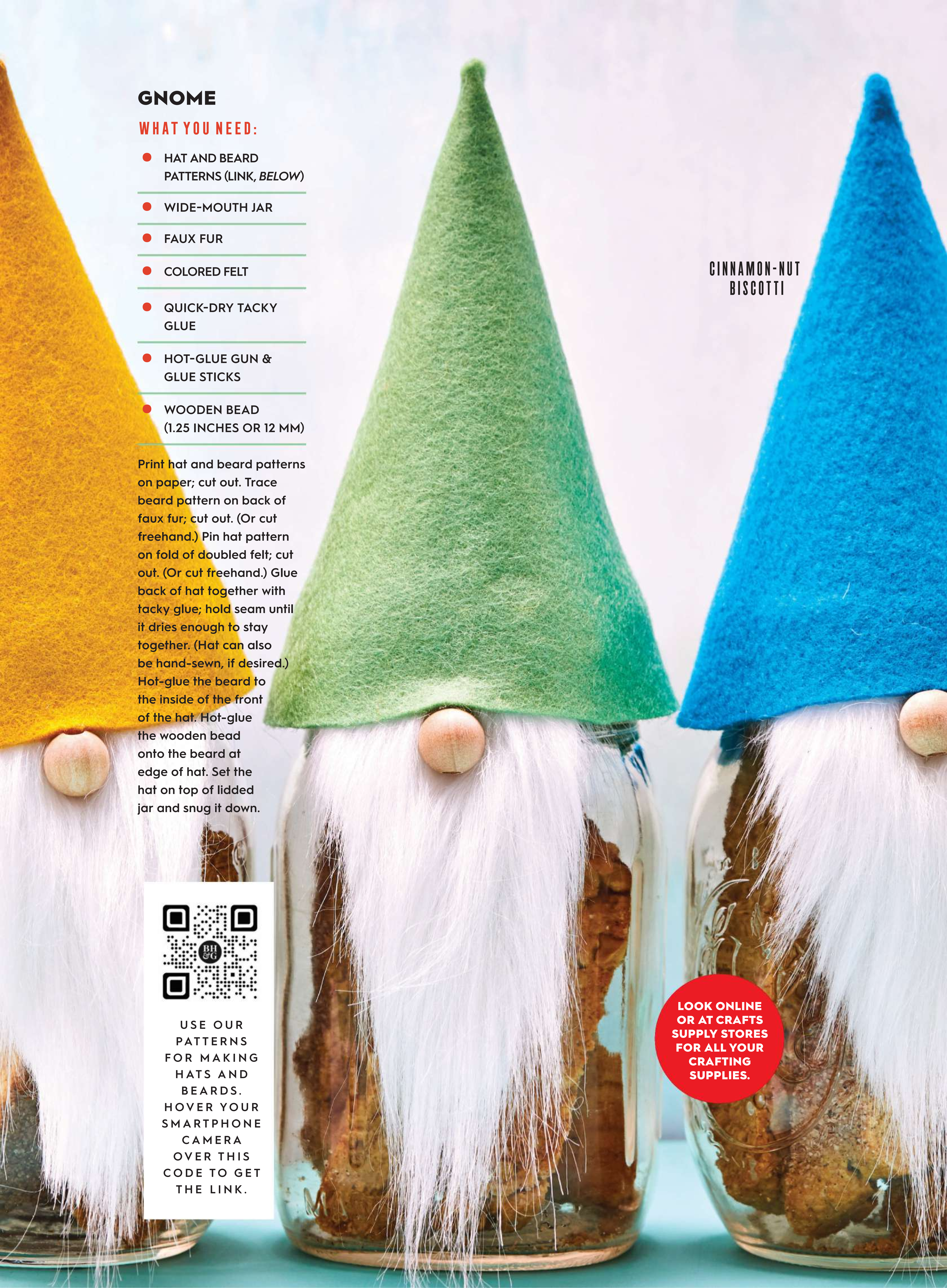
- WIDE-MOUTH JAR
- BOTTLE-BRUSH TREES (4.5 CM)
- WIRE CUTTER
- MINIATURE CAR
- MINIATURE TOY DEER
- HOT-GLUE GUN & GLUE STICKS
- FAKE SNOW
- 3-INCH CLEAR BALL ORNAMENT
- BAKERS TWINE & RIBBON

Trim bottle-brush trees to desired height with a wire cutter; tie one tree on car top. Glue deer, trees, and car to top of jar lid with hot glue and sprinkle fake snow around. Glue half of clear ornament to lid. Tie ribbon around jar rim.



GET CREATIVE AND BUILD YOUR OWN CUSTOMIZED *winter wonderland* SNOW DOME WITH SMALL TOYS AND CRAFTS SUPPLIES.

PUMPKIN BISCOTTI,
P. 33



GNOME

WHAT YOU NEED:

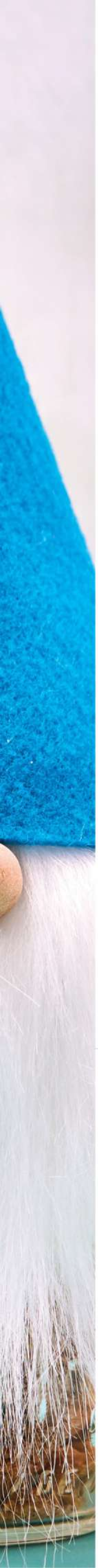
- HAT AND BEARD PATTERNS (LINK, *BELOW*)
- WIDE-MOUTH JAR
- FAUX FUR
- COLORED FELT
- QUICK-DRY TACKY GLUE
- HOT-GLUE GUN & GLUE STICKS
- WOODEN BEAD (1.25 INCHES OR 12 MM)

Print hat and beard patterns on paper; cut out. Trace beard pattern on back of faux fur; cut out. (Or cut freehand.) Pin hat pattern on fold of doubled felt; cut out. (Or cut freehand.) Glue back of hat together with tacky glue; hold seam until it dries enough to stay together. (Hat can also be hand-sewn, if desired.) Hot-glue the beard to the inside of the front of the hat. Hot-glue the wooden bead onto the beard at edge of hat. Set the hat on top of lidded jar and snug it down.

USE OUR PATTERNS FOR MAKING HATS AND BEARDS. HOVER YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA OVER THIS CODE TO GET THE LINK.

CINNAMON-NUT BISCOTTI

LOOK ONLINE OR AT CRAFTS SUPPLY STORES FOR ALL YOUR CRAFTING SUPPLIES.



CINNAMON-NUT *Biscotti*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 41 minutes at 325°F
COOL 15 minutes

2½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups + 4 tsp. sugar
1½ tsp. baking powder
2½ tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. salt
2 eggs
2 egg yolks (reserve 1 egg white)
6 Tbsp. butter, melted
1½ cups finely chopped walnuts

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl combine flour, 1½ cups of the sugar, the baking powder, 1 tsp. of the cinnamon, and the salt. Make a well in center of flour mixture. In a small bowl whisk together eggs, egg yolks, and melted butter. Add to flour mixture along with walnuts. Stir until combined and mixture starts to form a ball. Gently knead dough until it comes together.
3. Divide dough into thirds. Shape each portion into an 8-inch roll. Place two rolls about 3 inches apart on one of the prepared cookie sheets. Place remaining roll on the remaining cookie sheet. Flatten rolls to about 3½ inches wide. In a small bowl stir together the remaining 4 tsp. sugar and 1½ tsp. cinnamon. Lightly beat the reserved egg white and brush rolls. Sprinkle rolls generously with cinnamon-sugar mixture.
4. Bake on separate oven racks about 25 minutes or until rolls are firm and light brown, rotating sheets halfway through. Place cookie sheets on wire racks; cool 15 minutes.
5. Transfer rolls to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut each roll diagonally into ½-inch slices. Place slices, cut sides down, on cookie sheets.
6. Bake 8 minutes. Turn slices over; bake 8 to 10 minutes more or until crisp and light golden brown. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 30 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *147 cal., 7 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 31 mg chol., 128 mg sodium, 20 g carb., 1 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

BROWNED BUTTER GINGER *Biscotti*

Pictured on *p. 30.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 41 minutes at 325°F
COOL 15 minutes

½ cup butter
2¾ cups all-purpose flour
1¼ cups sugar
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground ginger
2 eggs
1 egg yolk
¼ cup molasses
Chopped candied ginger (optional)
Coarse sanding sugar (optional)

1. In a small saucepan heat butter over medium-low about 15 minutes or until butter is browned and smells nutty. Immediately remove from heat. Pour into a small bowl; let cool.
2. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper.
3. In a large bowl combine the next five ingredients (through ginger). Make a well in center of flour mixture. Whisk eggs, egg yolk, and molasses into browned butter. Add to flour mixture. Stir until combined and mixture starts to form a ball. Gently knead dough until it comes together.
4. Divide dough into thirds. Shape each portion into an 8-inch roll. Place two rolls about 3 inches apart on one of the prepared cookie sheets. Place remaining roll on the remaining cookie sheet. Flatten rolls to about 3½ inches wide. Sprinkle rolls with, if using, chopped candied ginger and coarse sugar.
5. Bake on separate oven racks about 25 minutes or until rolls are firm and light brown, rotating sheets halfway through. Place cookie sheets on wire racks; cool 15 minutes.
6. Transfer rolls to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut each roll diagonally into ½-inch slices. Place slices, cut sides down, on cookie sheets.
7. Bake 8 minutes. Turn slices over; bake 8 to 10 minutes more or until crisp and light golden brown. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 30 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *116 cal., 4 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 27 mg chol., 133 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 0 g fiber, 10 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

PUMPKIN *Biscotti*

Pictured on *p. 31.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 45 minutes at 325°F
COOL 15 minutes

2¾ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed brown sugar
1½ tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
½ cup canned pumpkin
⅓ cup butter, melted
1 egg
1 egg yolk
¾ cup finely chopped pecans
¾ cup dried cranberries, chopped
Melted white chocolate (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two large cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl combine the first six ingredients (through pumpkin pie spice). Make a well in center of flour mixture. In a small bowl whisk together pumpkin, melted butter, egg, and egg yolk. Add to flour mixture along with pecans and cranberries. Stir until combined and mixture starts to form a ball. Gently knead dough until it comes together.
3. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough into thirds. Shape each portion into an 8-inch roll. Place two rolls 3 inches apart on one of the prepared cookie sheets. Place remaining roll on the remaining cookie sheet. Flatten rolls to about 3½ inches wide.
4. Bake on separate oven racks about 25 minutes or until rolls are firm and light brown, rotating sheets halfway through. Place cookie sheets on wire racks; cool 15 minutes.
5. Transfer rolls to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, cut each roll diagonally into ½-inch slices. Place slices, cut sides down, on cookie sheets.
6. Bake 10 minutes. Turn slices over; bake about 10 minutes more or until crisp and golden brown. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Dip cooled cookies in or drizzle with melted white chocolate (if using) and sprinkle with additional chopped dried cranberries. **Makes 30 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *134 cal., 4 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 18 mg chol., 123 mg sodium, 23 g carb., 1 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

EVERYTHING SHORTBREAD
P. 37

COOKIES TO *Savor*

TAKE A BREAK FROM THE USUAL SUGARY SWEETS THIS HOLIDAY WITH A SAVORY SPIN ON COOKIES. PAIR THEM WITH COCKTAILS OR GLASSES OF WINE.

MANCHEGO THUMBPRINTS
WITH FIG PRESERVES

P. 37

BLUE CHEESE AND DRIED CHERRY OATMEAL COOKIES

FREEZE FOR LATER

Dough logs can be frozen up to 3 months. If freezing, place wrapped logs in a resealable freezer bag. Thaw about 10 minutes or until soft enough to cut without crumbling. Bake as directed, adding 1 to 2 minutes to baking time.

SET THESE SAVORY COOKIES OUT FOR PRE-MEAL NIBBLES, OR *feature them on a charcuterie tray.*

BLUE CHEESE AND DRIED CHERRY OATMEAL *Cookies*

PREP 20 minutes
CHILL 2 hours
BAKE 20 minutes per batch at 325°F

1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ cup oat flour (see tip, *below*)
½ tsp. dried thyme, crushed
¼ tsp. salt
¾ cup cold butter, cut up
1 egg, lightly beaten
½ cup coarsely chopped dried cherries
½ cup crumbled blue cheese
½ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts

1. In a large bowl stir together flours, thyme, and salt. Using a pastry blender, cut butter into flour mixture until mixture resembles fine crumbs and starts to cling. Stir in egg. Add cherries and blue cheese. Knead gently until mixture forms a ball. Divide dough in half.
2. Roll dough into two 7-inch logs. Roll logs in chopped walnuts. Wrap each log in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 2 days (tip, *opposite*).
3. Preheat oven to 325°F. Unwrap and slice each log into ⅜-inch slices. Arrange slices 1 inch apart on parchment-lined cookie sheets. Bake 20 minutes or until just slightly browned and set. Cool on cookie sheets 5 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack. **Makes 36 cookies.**
TO STORE Place cookies in an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator up to 4 days or freeze up to 2 months.
PER COOKIE *86 cal., 6 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 70 mg sodium, 7 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

OAT FLOUR Make oat flour by processing rolled oats in a blender or food processor until a fine powder.

EVERYTHING *Shortbread*

Pictured on *p. 34.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes per batch at 325°F

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
¾ cup cold butter
¾ cup shredded white cheddar cheese (3 oz.)
1 tsp. hot pepper sauce
1 egg white beaten with 1 Tbsp. water
2 tsp. Homemade Everything Seasoning *(below)* or purchased everything bagel seasoning
Cream cheese spread (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a large bowl stir together flours. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter, cheddar cheese, and hot sauce until mixture resembles fine crumbs and starts to cling. Form the mixture into a ball and knead gently until smooth.
2. On a lightly floured surface, roll or pat dough to ¼ inch thick. Using 1½-inch cookie cutters, cut out dough, rerolling scraps as needed. Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Brush with egg white mixture and sprinkle with everything seasoning.
3. Bake about 20 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. Cool on cookie sheet 5 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Serve with cream cheese (if using). **Makes 48 cookies.**
TO STORE Place cookies in an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator up to 1 week or freeze up to 3 months.
PER COOKIE *52 cal., 4 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 51 mg sodium, 4 g carb., 0 g fiber, 0 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

HOMEMADE EVERYTHING SEASONING In a small bowl stir together 2 Tbsp. each sesame seeds and poppy seeds; 1 Tbsp. each dried minced garlic and dried minced onion, crushed; and ¾ tsp. salt. Transfer to an airtight container. Store in a cool dark place up to 6 months.

MANCHEGO *Thumbprints* WITH FIG PRESERVES

Pictured on *p. 35.*
PREP 25 minutes
BAKE 15 minutes per batch at 350°F

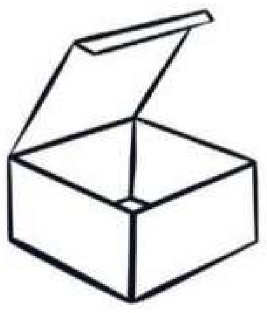
1½ cups all-purpose flour
¾ cup yellow cornmeal
1 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
1 cup cold butter
7 oz. Manchego cheese, shredded (1¾ cups)
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 Tbsp. milk
½ to ¾ cup fig preserves

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl stir together the first five ingredients (through crushed red pepper). Using a pastry blender, cut butter and Manchego cheese into flour mixture until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in egg and milk until well blended. Form the mixture into a ball and knead gently until smooth.
2. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Press your thumb into center of each ball.
3. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until bottoms are light brown. If cookie centers have puffed up during baking, press again with the back of a small spoon. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Before serving, fill centers with fig preserves. **Makes 50 cookies.**
TO STORE Place unfilled cookies in an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator up to 1 week or freeze up to 3 months.
PER COOKIE *82 cal., 5 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 72 mg sodium, 7 g carb., 0 g fiber, 2 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

THE TOTAL *Package*

COOKIE KITS BRING JOY IN TWO WAYS—A FUN AFTERNOON PROJECT TO PASS THE TIME WHILE COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS TO CHRISTMAS AND A SWEET TREAT TO ENJOY WHEN THEY ARE DONE.

GET IT TOGETHER! Line gift boxes with tissue paper. Arrange one-fourth of the Maple Cutout Cookies *(p. 40)* in each box. (Tie them with bakers twine, if you like.) Divide sprinkles among plastic bags or jars; add them to each gift box. Divide Maple Frosting *(p. 40)* among disposable decorating bags; twist open ends and tie with knots or secure with twist ties. (Add a note to snip off the tips of the bags when ready to decorate.) Add frosting bags to each box. If you like, add an inspiration photo for decorating cookies. Close boxes and decorate with ribbon as desired.

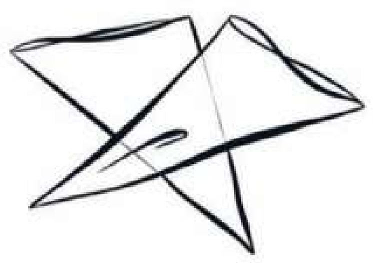


Four 6- to 8-inch food-safe gift boxes

Desired-color food-safe tissue paper

Assorted sprinkles, candies, and/or colored sugar

Small resealable plastic bags or jars



Disposable decorating bags (trim size)

Desired-color ribbon

GIVE IDEAS Include a snapshot of our decorated cookies to inspire and get the creative juices flowing.

MAPLE *Cutout* COOKIES

PREP 20 minutes **CHILL** 30 minutes **BAKE** 6 minutes per batch at 375°F

1	cup butter, softened
1	cup granulated sugar
1	tsp. baking soda
1	tsp. cream of tartar
½	tsp. salt
1	egg
¼	cup pure maple syrup
1	tsp. vanilla
2½	cups all-purpose flour
1	recipe Maple Frosting

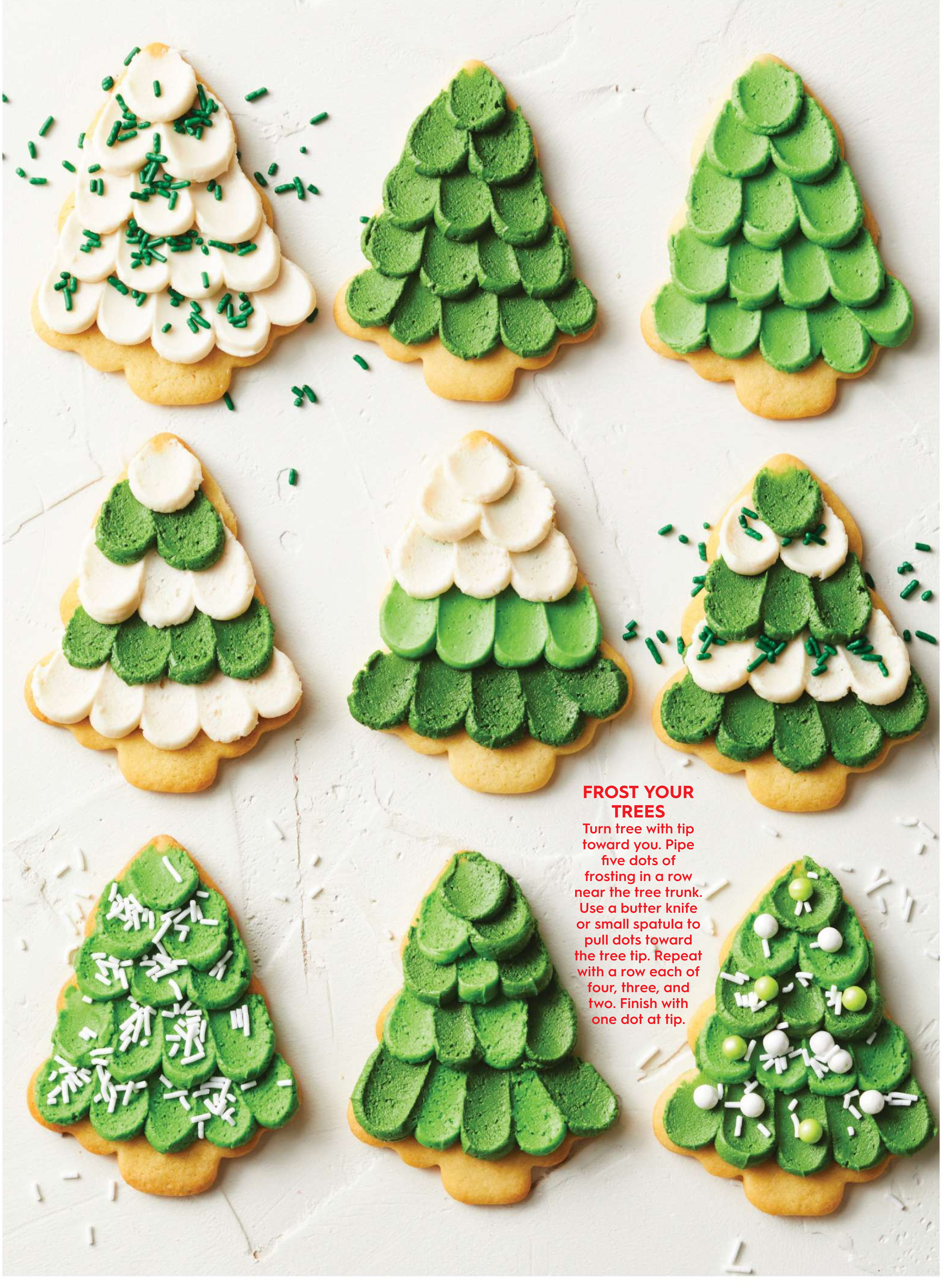
1. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking soda, cream of tartar, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, syrup, and vanilla. Beat in flour. Cover and chill 30 to 60 minutes or until dough is easy to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a well-floured surface, roll dough to ⅛ inch thick. Using 3-inch cookie cutters, cut out dough. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Reroll scraps as needed.

3. Bake 6 to 8 minutes or until edges just start to brown. Remove; cool on wire racks. **Makes 48 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *181 cal., 9 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 14 mg chol., 83 mg sodium, 21 g carb., 0 g fiber, 18 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

MAPLE FROSTING In a large bowl beat 1 cup shortening, ¼ cup pure maple syrup, and 2 tsp. vanilla with a mixer on medium until fluffy. Gradually beat in 4 cups powdered sugar until combined. If necessary, beat in enough water (1 tsp. at a time) to make frosting spreading consistency. If desired, tint portions of frosting with gel food coloring.



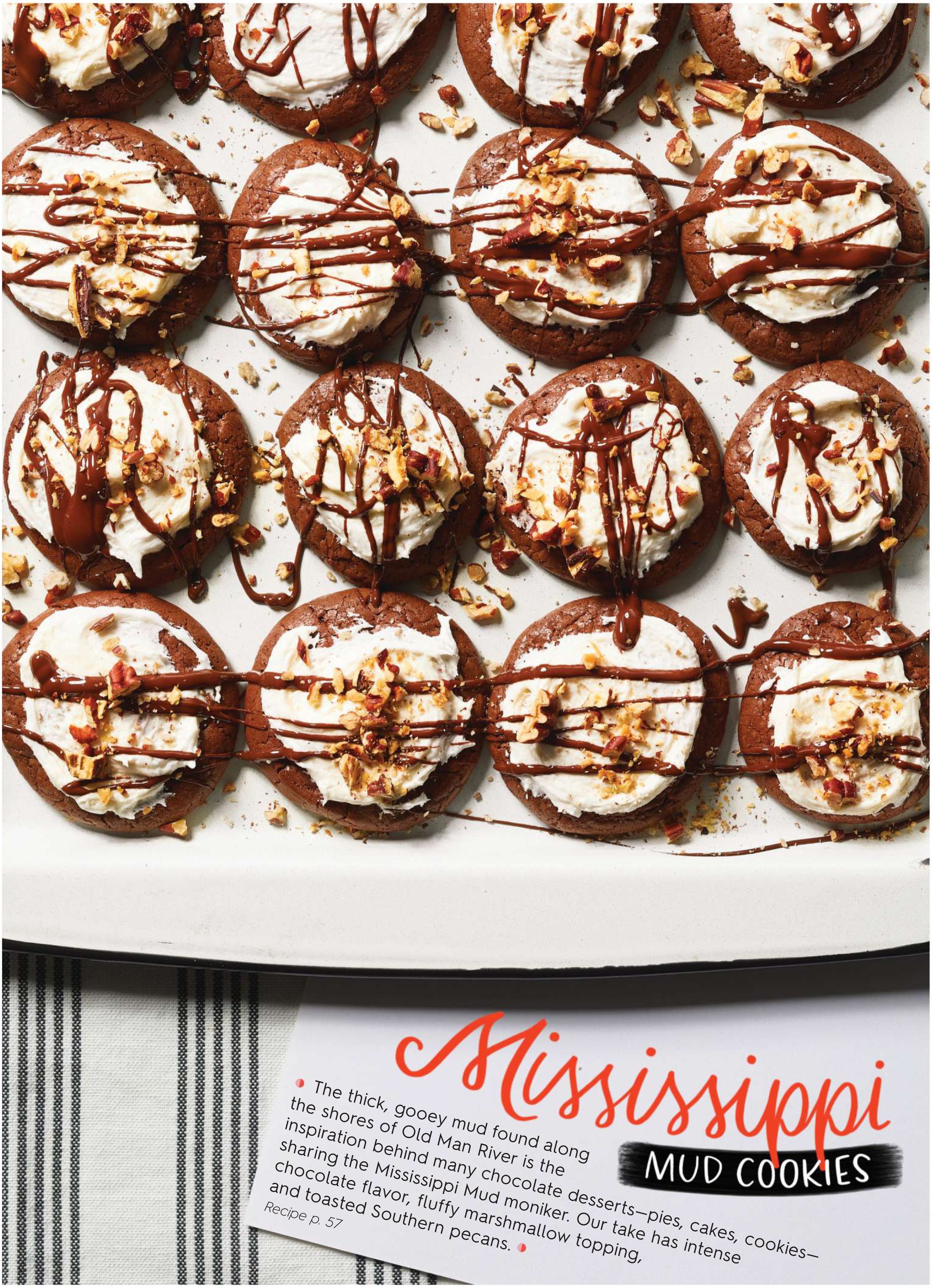
FROST YOUR TREES

Turn tree with tip toward you. Pipe five dots of frosting in a row near the tree trunk. Use a butter knife or small spatula to pull dots toward the tree tip. Repeat with a row each of four, three, and two. Finish with one dot at tip.

CROSS-COUNTRY *Cookies*

PLAN YOUR ROUTE FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA FOR A TASTE-FILLED TREK ACROSS THE NATION. THESE COOKIES ARE INSPIRED BY THE FLAVORS AND SPECIALTIES FROM SOME OF OUR GREAT AMERICAN CITIES, STATES, AND REGIONS.

illustrations by **RAE DANNEMAN**



Mississippi MUD COOKIES

The thick, gooey mud found along the shores of Old Man River is the inspiration behind many chocolate desserts—pies, cakes, cookies—sharing the Mississippi Mud moniker. Our take has intense chocolate flavor, fluffy marshmallow topping, and toasted Southern pecans.

Recipe p. 57

Montana HUCKLEBERRY JAM THUMBPRINT COOKIES

Montana huckleberries are similar to wild blueberries in size and flavor, but they have a special richness all their own. If you can't go there yourself to pick wild berries before the bears get them, enjoy their intense flavor in these jewellike thumbprint cookies.

Recipe p. 57

HUCKLEBERRY JAM NOT AVAILABLE LOCALLY? BUY A JAR ONLINE OR SUBSTITUTE WILD BLUEBERRY OR BLACKBERRY JAM OR PRESERVES.

Missouri
GOOEY BUTTER CAKE SQUARES

◗ Gooey butter cakes are the result of a happy accident, or so we're told. The origin story says the first cake came about in the 1930s when a rookie baker in St. Louis mixed up the amounts of butter and sugar in a cake recipe. The result was too good to throw out and an addictively sweet confection was born. ◗

Recipe p. 58

Virginia

LEMON CHESS PIE BARS

Chess pie is a Southern dessert with ties to Virginia. You could try to pin its history down, but the stories would fill a book. Suffice it to say, it's simple, sweet, and utterly comforting. These bars use old-fashioned buttermilk with a sunny splash of lemon juice instead of the traditional spoonful of vinegar.

Recipe p. 58

Massachusetts BOSTON CREAM PIELETTES

Boston cream pie is actually layered yellow sponge cake with a creamy, custardy filling and rich chocolate icing. We shrink it down to enjoy in these handheld sandwich cookies.

BOSTON CREAM Pielettes

PREP 35 minutes **BAKE** 6 minutes per batch at 375°F **CHILL** 3 hours

½	**cup butter, softened**
1	**cup sugar**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
¼	**tsp. salt**
1	**egg**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
2	**cups all-purpose flour**
½	**cup buttermilk**
1	**recipe Pastry Cream**
1	**recipe Chocolate Ganache**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking soda, and salt. Beat until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Alternately add flour and buttermilk, beating until combined.
3. Drop batter in 1-inch rounds on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake about 6 minutes or until set. Remove; cool on wire racks.
4. Spread Pastry Cream onto bottoms of half of the cookies. Top with bottoms of remaining cookies. Spread tops of filled cookies with Chocolate Ganache. Chill cookies 1 to 2 hours to allow filling to set and cookies to soften slightly. **Makes 24 sandwich cookies.**

PASTRY CREAM In a small bowl whisk together 2 Tbsp. whole milk, 1 egg yolk, 4 tsp. cornstarch, and 1 tsp. all-purpose flour. In a small saucepan combine 1 cup whole milk, ¼ cup sugar, and ⅛ tsp. salt. Bring to boiling, stirring to dissolve sugar. Gradually pour about half of the hot milk mixture into the yolk mixture, whisking to combine. Add all of the yolk mixture to the saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Whisk in 1 Tbsp. butter and ½ tsp. vanilla. Transfer to a bowl. Cover the surface of the pastry cream with plastic wrap. Chill 2 hours or until cold.

CHOCOLATE GANACHE
Place 1 cup semisweet chocolate chips in a small bowl. In a small saucepan bring ½ cup heavy cream just to boiling. Pour over chocolate chips. Let stand 5 minutes. Whisk until smooth. Let stand 15 minutes to thicken.

PER SANDWICH COOKIE *185 cal., 9 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 34 mg chol., 115 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 1 g fiber, 15 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

Texas RUBY RED GRAPEFRUIT SHORTBREAD COOKIES

◗ Texas red grapefruit are a winter treat that deserves more than a place on your breakfast table. Sweet, delicate shortbread is the perfect cookie for letting the flavor of its zest and juice shine through. ◗

Recipe p. 58

Kentucky PECAN PIE BARS

These chocolate and pecan bars are a handheld variation of that favorite Southern pie. A splash of bourbon intensifies their gooey goodness and brings to mind the state's famous horse race.

PECAN PIE Bars

PREP 30 minutes **BAKE** 45 minutes at 350°F **COOL** 2 hours 20 minutes

1½ cups all-purpose flour
3 Tbsp. granulated sugar
¾ tsp. salt
½ cup cold butter, cut up
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup dark-color corn syrup
3 eggs
¼ cup butter, melted
2 Tbsp. bourbon
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups pecans, coarsely chopped
1 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chips (2 cups)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Butter foil.

2. For crust, in a food processor combine flour, granulated sugar, and ½ tsp. of the salt. Pulse to combine. Add cold butter; pulse until crumbly. Press evenly into the prepared pan. Bake about 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

3. For filling, in a large bowl whisk together brown sugar and corn syrup. Add eggs, melted butter, bourbon, vanilla, and the remaining ¼ tsp. salt. Whisk to combine. Stir in pecans and chocolate chips. Pour over hot crust.

4. Bake about 30 minutes or until evenly browned and bubbly across the surface and center appears set. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars.

Makes 24 bars.

PER BAR *301 cal., 17 g fat (7 g sat. fat), 39 mg chol., 152 mg sodium, 37 g carb., 2 g fiber, 29 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Ore-gone TRAIL COOKIES

With tongue firmly in cheek, we took some regional liberties by making chunky, bumpy trail mix cookies and naming them for the wagon-train route to the west

ORE-GONE TRAIL Cookies

PREP 25 minutes **BAKE** 8 minutes per batch at 375°F

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¾ cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup peanut butter
- 1¼ cups packed brown sugar
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1½ tsp. vanilla
- 2⅔ cups regular rolled oats
- 1 cup semisweet chocolate chunks
- ¼ cup chopped almonds, toasted
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas), toasted
- 1 Tbsp. whole flaxseeds

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl combine the first six ingredients (through salt).

2. In a large bowl beat butter and peanut butter on medium to high 30 seconds. Add both sugars. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture and the remaining ingredients.

3. Drop dough by 1½-Tbsp. portions 3 inches apart onto prepared cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned and centers appear set. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 56 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *138 cal., 6 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 78 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 1 g fiber, 12 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

Georgia PEACHES & CREAM BARS

Sweet, juicy Georgia peaches are hard to come by in winter, but you can get that peaches and cream vibe with good peach preserves over a cheese-cakey filling and shortbreadlike crust.

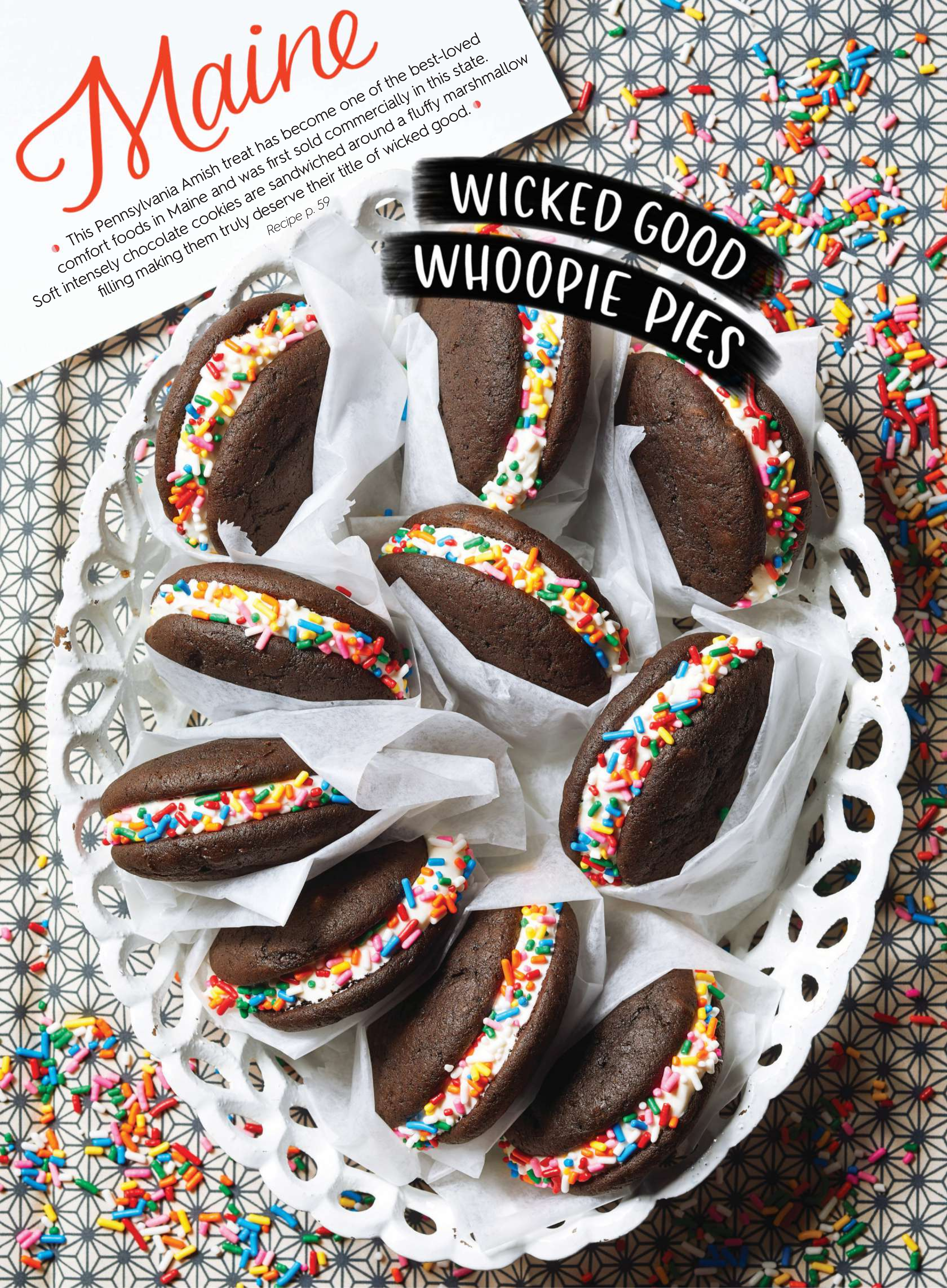
Recipe p. 58

Maine

WICKED GOOD WHOOPIE PIES

This Pennsylvania Amish treat has become one of the best-loved comfort foods in Maine and was first sold commercially in this state. Soft intensely chocolate cookies are sandwiched around a fluffy marshmallow filling making them truly deserve their title of wicked good.

Recipe p. 59



Ohio BUCKEYE COOKIES

◗ Easier to make than the candies named for this iconic nut, these chocolate and peanut butter cookies have just as much appeal in cookie form. ◗

Recipe p. 59

North Carolina

BROWN SUGAR PIE BARS

Brown sugar pie is what you make when you want a little something for dessert but don't have a lot of ingredients. This Southern pie is like pecan pie without the pecans. The smaller bites that bars provide give you just enough of this sweet treat

Recipe p. 59

Maryland

BERGER OF BALTIMORE COOKIES

These cookies are the perfect balance of light golden cookie topped with a dense chocolate concoction that is a cross between icing and fudge—the yin and yang of cookiedom inspired by the original from Charm City.

Recipe p. 59

New York GIANT GOOEY CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

New York City's chocolate chip cookies are big chocolaty handfuls of heaven. It's important to serve this homage to that classic cookie warm, so if you can't eat them right away, follow the directions for storing the dough balls and baking them on demand.

BAKE YOUR WAY *across the country* TO EXPERIENCE ICONIC REGIONAL FLAVORS.

GIANT GOOEY CHOCOLATE CHIP *Cookies*

PREP 20 minutes
CHILL 1 hour 30 minutes
BAKE 13 minutes per batch at 400°F
COOL 15 minutes

3⅓ cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup cornstarch
1 tsp. kosher salt
½ tsp. baking soda
1¼ cups butter, melted
1¼ cups packed brown sugar
½ cup granulated sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
2 cups coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted
1 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chunks or chips (2 cups)
½ cup milk chocolate chips or dark chocolate chips

1. In a medium bowl sift together flour, cornstarch, salt, and baking soda. In a large bowl stir together butter and both sugars. Stir in eggs, one at a time, until combined. Stir in flour mixture until combined. Stir in walnuts and chocolate chips.
2. Cover and chill dough 1 hour. Portion dough into heaping ⅓-cup balls (14 dough balls). Cover and chill dough balls 30 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper. Evenly space seven dough portions on each cookie sheet. Bake 13 to 14 minutes or until golden. Cool on cookie sheets 15 minutes. Serve warm. **Makes 14 cookies.**
TO MAKE AHEAD Prepare as directed through Step 2. Transfer dough balls to an airtight container; cover. Store in the refrigerator up to 1 week or freeze up to 3 months. Bake refrigerated dough as directed. Bake frozen dough at 375°F 16 to 18 minutes.
PER COOKIE *649 cal., 39 g fat (18 g sat. fat), 86 mg chol., 286 mg sodium, 75 g carb., 4 g fiber, 45 g sugars, 9 g pro.*

MISSISSIPPI MUD *Cookies*

Pictured on *p. 43.*
PREP 25 minutes
COOL 10 minutes
STAND 20 minutes
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 350°F

7 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
5 oz. unsweetened chocolate, chopped
½ cup butter, cut up
⅓ cup all-purpose flour
¼ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 cup granulated sugar
¾ cup packed brown sugar
4 eggs
½ cup butter, softened
1 7-oz. jar marshmallow creme
1 cup powdered sugar
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 Tbsp. shortening
½ cup chopped pecans, toasted

1. For cookies, in a 2-qt. saucepan combine bittersweet and unsweetened chocolates and cut-up butter. Heat and stir over low until melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Cool 10 minutes. In a small bowl combine flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl combine granulated sugar, brown sugar, and eggs. Beat with a mixer on medium to high 2 minutes or until thickened and lighter in color, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in melted chocolate mixture. Add flour mixture; beat until combined. Cover surface of dough with plastic wrap. Let stand 20 minutes (dough thickens as it stands).
3. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Drop dough by teaspoons 2 inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Bake about 8 minutes or until edges are firm. Cool 2 minutes on cookie sheet. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
4. For frosting, in a medium bowl beat softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in marshmallow creme until smooth. Beat in powdered sugar until light and fluffy.
5. For chocolate drizzle, in a small saucepan heat and stir chocolate chips and shortening over low until smooth.
6. Spread cooled cookies with marshmallow frosting. Drizzle with chocolate drizzle and sprinkle with pecans. Let stand until set. **Makes 66 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *118 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 41 mg sodium, 14 g carb., 1 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

HUCKLEBERRY JAM THUMBPRINT *Cookies*

Pictured on *p. 44.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 12 minutes per batch at 325°F

1½ cups pecans
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. salt
1 cup butter, softened
½ cup packed brown sugar
⅓ cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. orange zest
⅔ cup huckleberry jam or preserves
Crushed freeze-dried raspberries (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a food processor pulse pecans until finely ground. In a medium bowl combine pecans, flour, cinnamon, and salt.
2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add both sugars. Beat 3 minutes or until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, vanilla, and orange zest. Stir in flour mixture until combined.
3. Roll dough in 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets. Press your thumb into the center of each ball. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until edges are browned. Cool on cookie sheet 5 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
4. Before serving, spoon jam into center of each cookie. Sprinkle with freeze-dried raspberries (if using). **Makes 60 cookies.**
PER COOKIE *82 cal., 5 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 11 mg chol., 37 mg sodium, 9 g carb., 0 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

GOOEY BUTTER CAKE *Squares*

Pictured on *p. 45.*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 30 minutes at 350°F
CHILL overnight

¾	**cup butter, softened**
½	**cup granulated sugar**
1	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
3	**egg**
3	**tsp. vanilla**
¼	**tsp. almond extract**
1¼	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
2½	**cups powdered sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 13×9-inch baking pan.

2. For crust, in a medium bowl beat ½ cup of the butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add granulated sugar, baking powder, and ¼ tsp. of the salt. Beat on medium, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in 1 of the eggs, 2 tsp. of the vanilla, and the almond extract. Beat in flour just until combined. Spread in the prepared pan.

3. For filling, in a medium bowl beat cream cheese and the remaining ¼ cup butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in powdered sugar and the remaining 1 tsp. vanilla and ¼ tsp. salt. Beat in the remaining 2 eggs, one at a time, until combined. Pour batter over crust.

4. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cover and chill overnight. Dust with additional powdered sugar. Cut into bars. **Makes 36 bars.**

NOTE: These bars are best served the day after baking.

PER BAR *122 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 32 mg chol., 102 mg sodium, 15 g carb., 0 g fiber, 11 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

LEMON CHESS PIE *Bars*

Pictured on *p. 46.*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 35 minutes at 350°F

	Nonstick cooking spray
1½	**cups plus 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour**
2	**cups plus 3 Tbsp. sugar**
1	**tsp. salt**
½	**cup chilled butter, cut up**
6	**eggs**
2	**Tbsp. white cornmeal**
¾	**cup buttermilk**
½	**cup butter, melted**
1	**Tbsp. lemon zest**
½	**cup lemon juice**
1½	**tsp. vanilla**
	Powdered sugar (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Lightly coat foil with cooking spray.

2. For crust, in a food processor combine 1½ cups of the flour, 3 Tbsp. of the sugar, and ½ tsp. of the salt. Pulse to combine. Add chilled butter; pulse until crumbly. Press evenly into the prepared pan.

3. For filling, in a medium bowl lightly beat the eggs. Add cornmeal and the remaining 2 cups sugar, 2 Tbsp. flour, and ½ tsp. salt. Whisk to combine. Whisk in the next five ingredients (through vanilla). Pour filling over crust.

4. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until edges are golden brown and center is almost set (the center should just jiggle). Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. If you like, just before serving, sift powdered sugar over bars. Refrigerate bars in an airtight container up to 5 days. **Makes 32 bars.**

PER BAR *146 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 50 mg chol., 141 mg sodium, 20 g carb., 0 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

RUBY RED GRAPEFRUIT SHORTBREAD *Cookies*

Pictured on *p. 48.*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 18 minutes per batch at 325°F

1¼	**cups all-purpose flour**
3	**Tbsp. granulated sugar**
½	**tsp. ground ginger**
¼	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
½	**cup butter, cut up**
1	**Tbsp. ruby red grapefruit zest**
2	**tsp. ruby red grapefruit juice**
½	**tsp. pink sanding sugar**
½	**cup powdered sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. In a medium bowl stir together flour, granulated sugar, ginger, and cinnamon. Using a pastry blender, cut in butter and grapefruit zest until mixture resembles fine crumbs and starts to cling. Form the mixture into a ball and knead gently until smooth.

2. Roll dough into a 5½-inch log. If necessary, wrap in plastic wrap and chill about 30 minutes or until firm enough to cut log into ½-inch slices. Cut each slice in half crosswise to make a half-moon shape. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Prick cookies with a fork to make a segment pattern.

3. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until bottoms just start to brown and centers are set. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

4. In a small bowl stir together grapefruit juice and sanding sugar. Stir in powdered sugar until smooth. Spread icing on curved edges of cooled cookies. If you like, sprinkle with additional pink sanding sugar. Let stand until set. **Makes 22 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *81 cal., 4 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 11 mg chol., 33 mg sodium, 10 g carb., 0 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

PEACHES AND CREAM *Bars*

Pictured on *p. 51.*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 30 minutes at 375°F

	Nonstick cooking spray
1¼	**cups sugar**
1	**cup pecans**
1	**cup plus 2 tsp. all-purpose flour**
½	**cup butter, cut up**
½	**tsp. salt**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
1	**8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened**
1	**egg**
1	**12-oz. jar peach preserves (1 cup)**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Lightly coat foil with cooking spray.

2. In a food processor combine 1 cup of the sugar and the pecans. Pulse until nuts are finely ground. Add 1 cup of the flour, the butter, salt, and ½ tsp. of the vanilla. Pulse until the mixture is crumbly.

3. Press half of the mixture (about 2 cups) evenly into the prepared pan.

4. In a medium bowl beat cream cheese with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add egg and the remaining ¼ cup sugar, 2 tsp. flour, and ½ tsp. vanilla. Beat until combined. Drop mixture by spoonfuls onto crust. Spread to an even layer. Top with peach preserves. Sprinkle remaining crust mixture over the top and spread to an even layer.

5. Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to lift uncut bars from pan. Cut into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 5 days. **Makes 32 bars.**

PER BAR *147 cal., 8 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 21 mg chol., 87 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 1 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

WICKED GOOD WHOOPIE Pies

Pictured on *p. 52.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 350°F

2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
½ cup butter, softened
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 tsp. instant espresso coffee powder
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1 cup buttermilk
⅓ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
1 recipe Marshmallow Filling
Colored sprinkles or jimmies or crushed striped round peppermint candies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl combine flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, and salt.
2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add brown sugar and espresso powder. Beat until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg and vanilla. Alternately add flour mixture and buttermilk, beating after each addition until combined. Stir in chocolate chips.
3. Drop dough by 1½-Tbsp. portions 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets. Bake about 10 minutes or until cookies spring back when lightly touched. Cool completely on cookie sheets.
4. Spread bottoms of half of the cookies with Marshmallow Filling. Top with bottoms of remaining cookies. Roll edges in sprinkles. **Makes 16 sandwich cookies.**

MARSHMALLOW FILLING

In a medium bowl beat ½ cup softened butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in one 7-oz. jar marshmallow creme and 2 tsp. vanilla. Beat in 1¾ cups powdered sugar until light and fluffy.

PER SANDWICH COOKIE *356 cal., 14 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 43 mg chol., 284 mg sodium, 55 g carb., 2 g fiber, 38 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

BUCKEYE Cookies

Pictured on *p. 53.*
PREP 30 minutes
BAKE 8 minutes per batch at 375°F
CHILL 10 minutes

1 cup butter, softened
1 cup packed brown sugar
¾ cup granulated sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup creamy peanut butter
½ cup powdered sugar
3 cups semisweet chocolate chips
2 Tbsp. shortening

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add brown and granulated sugars, baking soda, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Beat in cocoa powder until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour.
2. Drop dough by 1-Tbsp. portions 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are firm and centers appear set. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
3. In a small bowl stir together peanut butter and powdered sugar until smooth.
4. In a medium heavy saucepan, heat chocolate chips and shortening over low until melted and smooth, stirring occasionally.
5. Dip tops of cooled cookies in melted chocolate mixture. Chill 10 minutes or until chocolate is set. Top each cookie with about 1 tsp. peanut butter mixture. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 1 week. **Makes 50 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *176 cal., 10 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 17 mg chol., 105 mg sodium, 21 g carb., 1 g fiber, 15 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

BROWN SUGAR PIE Bars

Pictured on *p. 54.*
PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 50 minutes at 350°F

Nonstick cooking spray
1½ cups all-purpose flour
3 Tbsp. granulated sugar
1 tsp. salt
½ cup cold butter, cut up
3 eggs
3⅓ cups packed brown sugar
½ cup butter, melted
2 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. almond extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Lightly coat foil with cooking spray.
2. For crust, in a food processor combine flour, granulated sugar, and ½ tsp. of the salt. Pulse to combine. Add cold butter; pulse until crumbly. Press evenly into the prepared pan. Bake about 15 minutes or until lightly browned.
3. For filling, in a medium bowl lightly beat eggs. Whisk in brown sugar, melted butter, vanilla, almond extract, and the remaining ½ tsp. salt until combined. Pour over hot crust.
4. Bake about 35 minutes or until filling slightly jiggles when pan is tapped. Cool in pan on a wire rack (filling will continue to set as it cools). Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. **Makes 48 bars.**

PER BAR *115 cal., 4 g fat (3 g sat. fat), 22 mg chol., 88 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 0 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

BERGER OF BALTIMORE Cookies

Pictured on *p. 55.*
PREP 30 minutes
BAKE 9 minutes per batch at 350°F

4 cups cake flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 cup butter, softened
1½ cups sugar
2 egg whites
¼ cup half-and-half or whole milk
1 Tbsp. vanilla
1 recipe Fudge Frosting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a medium bowl combine cake flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugar. Beat about 3 minutes or until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg whites, half-and-half, and vanilla. Add flour mixture one-third at a time, beating until combined.
3. Drop dough by 1-Tbsp. portions 3 inches apart onto prepared cookie sheets. Press to flatten to ½ inch thick. Bake 9 to 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Remove; cool on wire racks.
4. Dip bottoms of cookies in warm Fudge Frosting. Spread any remaining frosting on the cookies; let stand, frosted sides up, until set. **Makes 54 cookies.**

FUDGE FROSTING In a medium saucepan combine one 12-oz. pkg. semisweet chocolate chips (2 cups), ¾ cup heavy cream, and 2 Tbsp. light-color corn syrup. Bring to boiling over medium, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Whisk in 1½ cups powdered sugar, 1 tsp. vanilla, and a pinch salt until smooth.

PER COOKIE *149 cal., 7 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 13 mg chol., 105 mg sodium, 22 g carb., 1 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

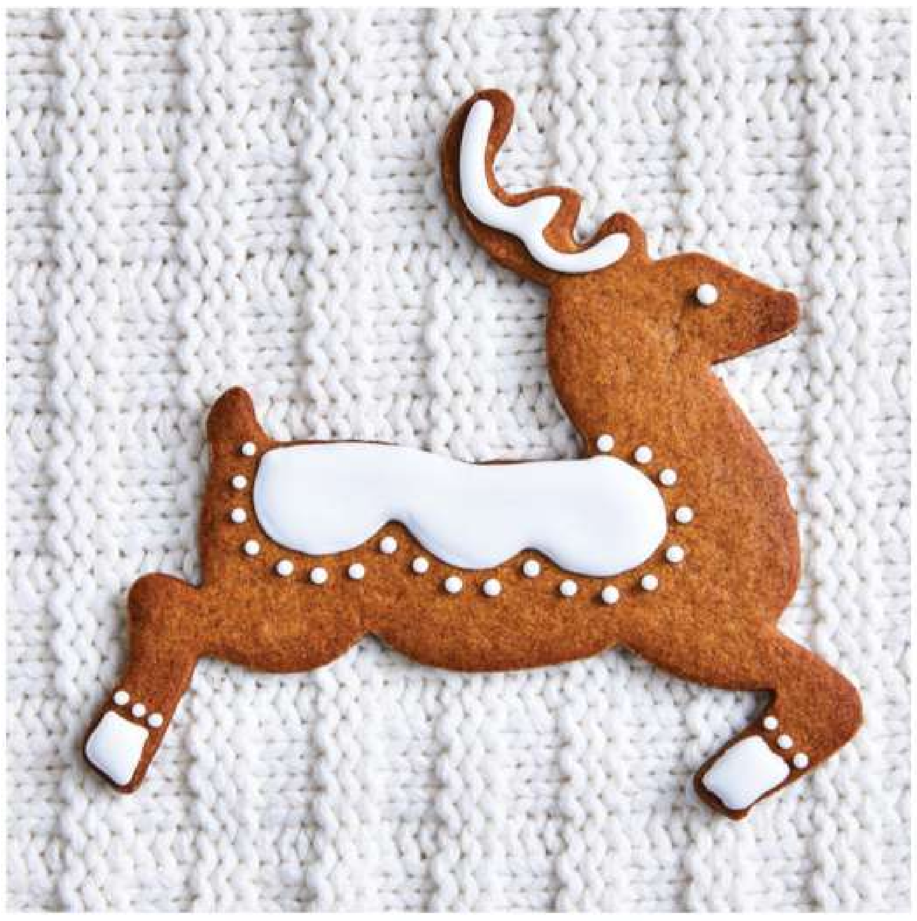
BROWNED BUTTER
CARDAMOM PEPPARKAKOR,
P. 63

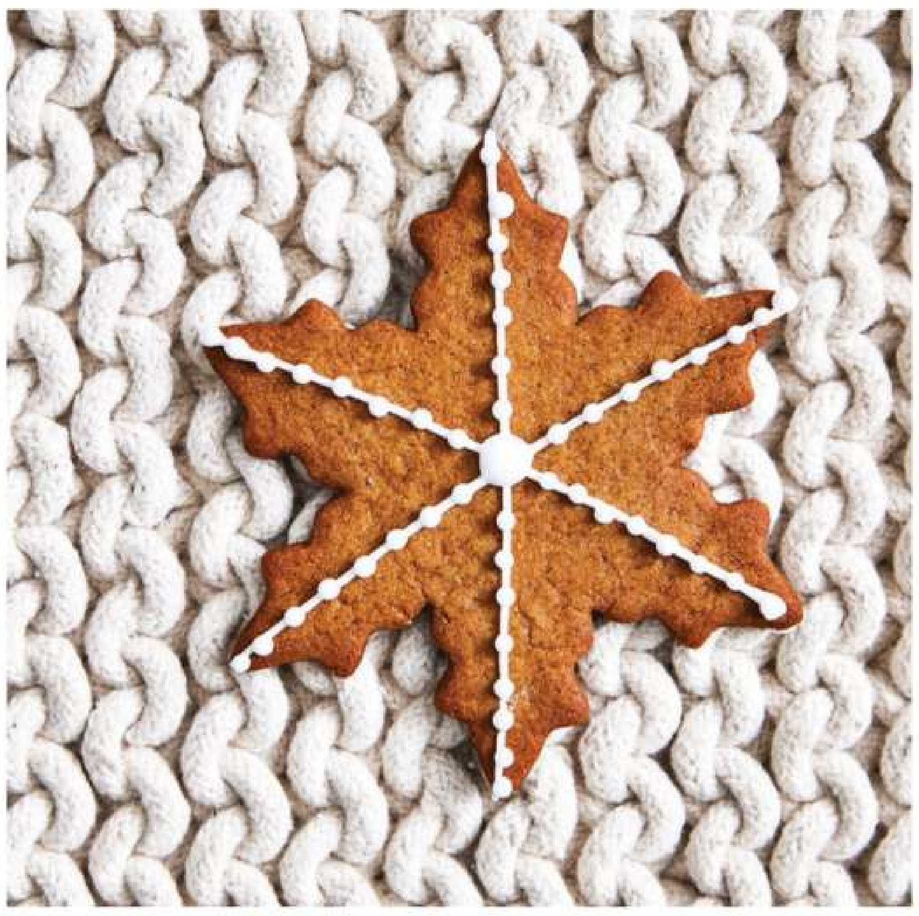
NORDIC Simplicity

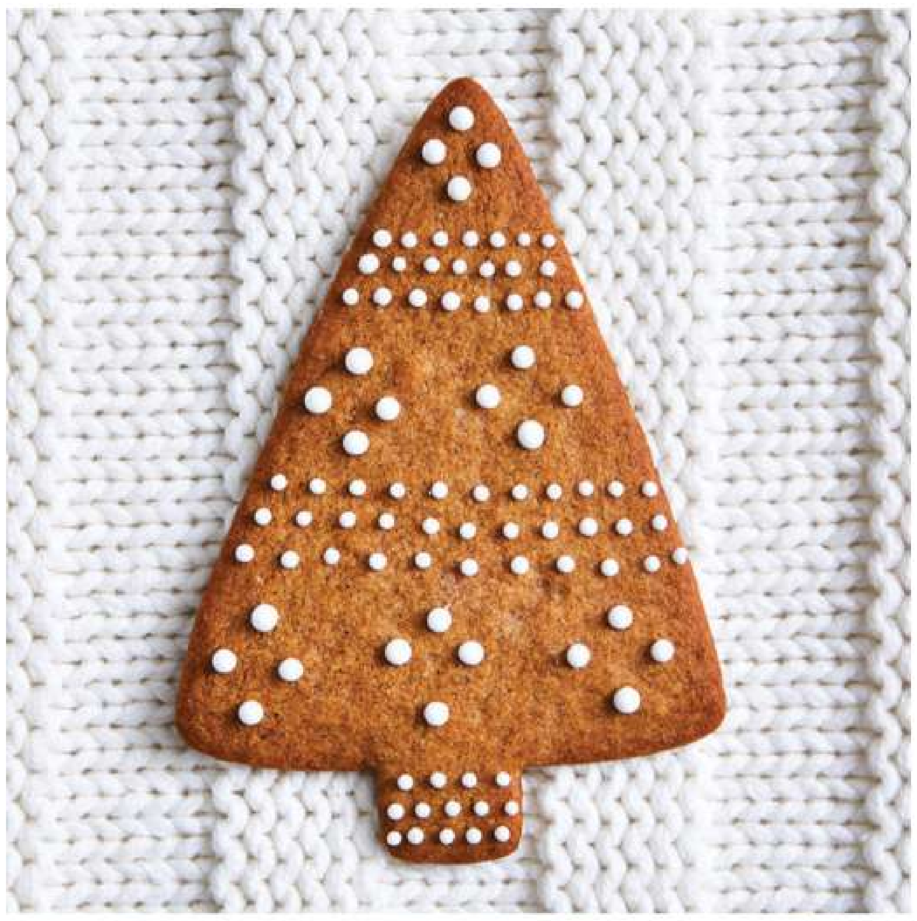
CLEAN LINES AND MINIMAL EMBELLISHMENT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF SCANDINAVIAN STYLE, AND THEY'RE THE THEME OF THESE LIGHTLY SPICED CUTOUTS WITH LOW-KEY ICING DESIGNS. THIS YEAR, THE MOST STRIKING COOKIES ON THE TRAY ARE ALSO THE EASIEST TO CREATE.

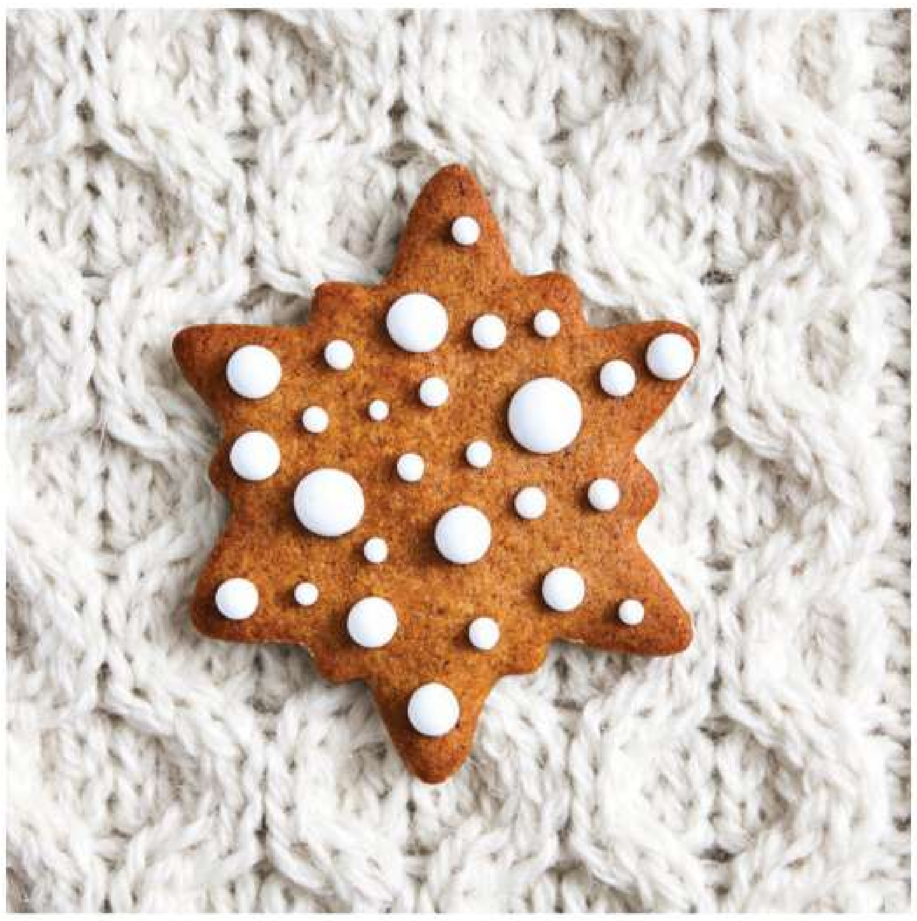
DECORATE

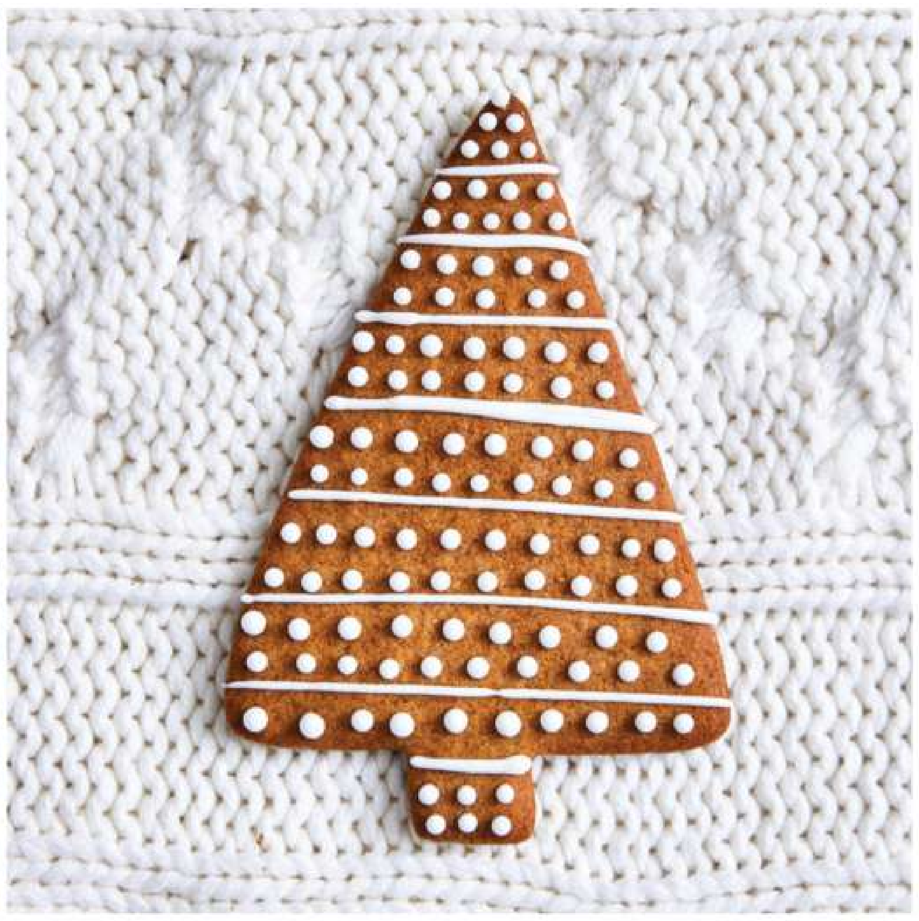
The beauty of these designs is they were all done with a pastry bag fitted with the same small round decorating tip (available at crafts supply stores). Use these ideas as inspiration, or create your own icing artistry.

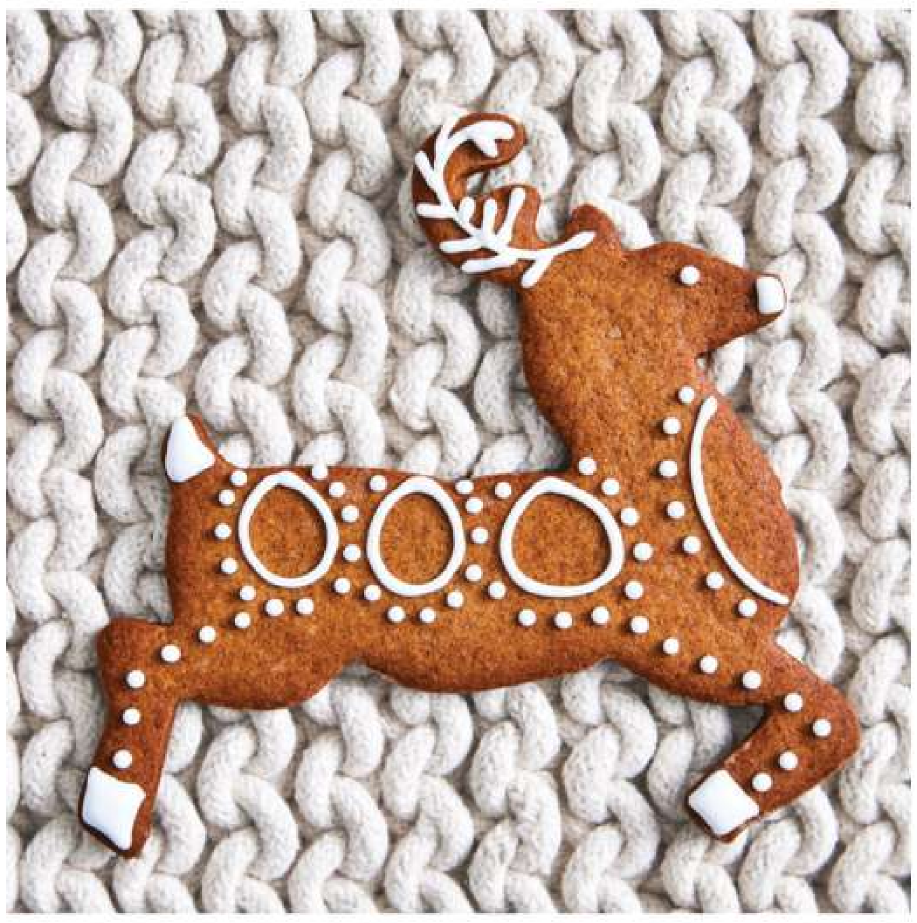


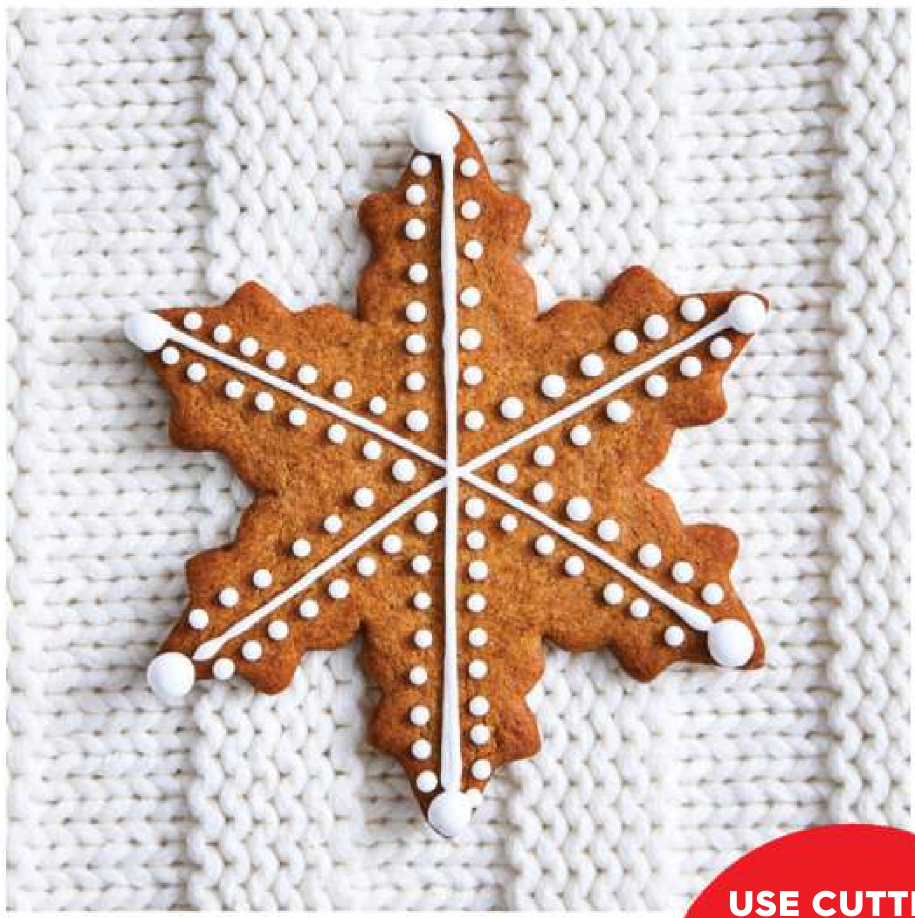


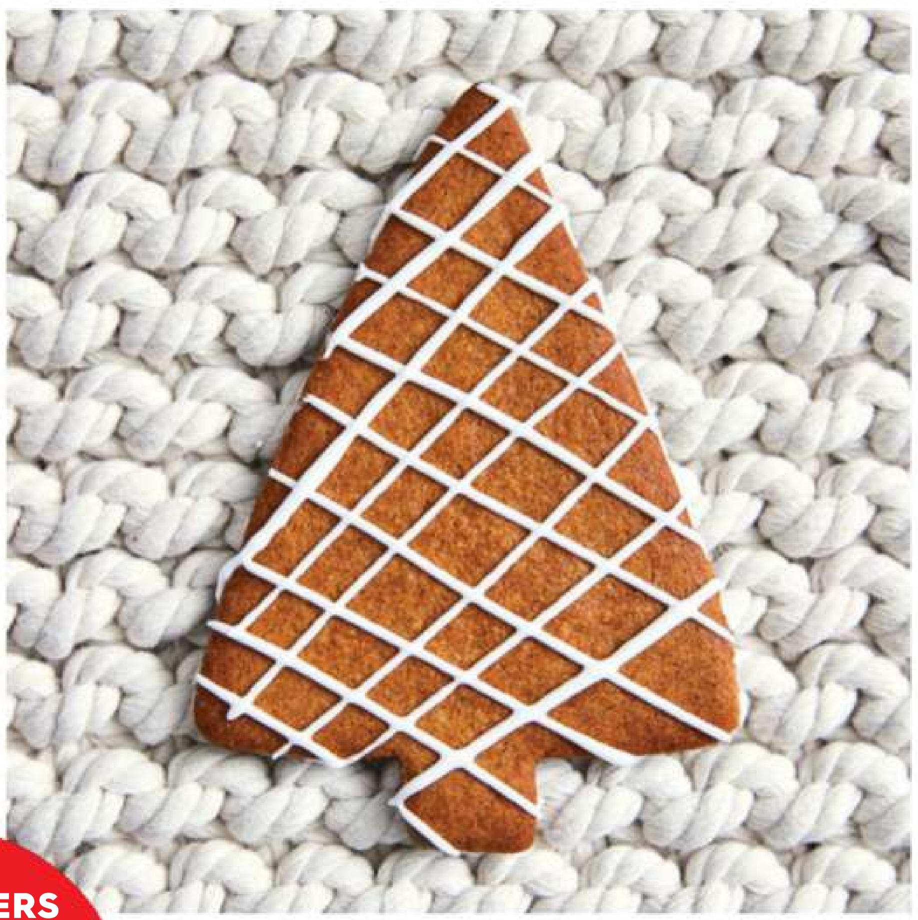


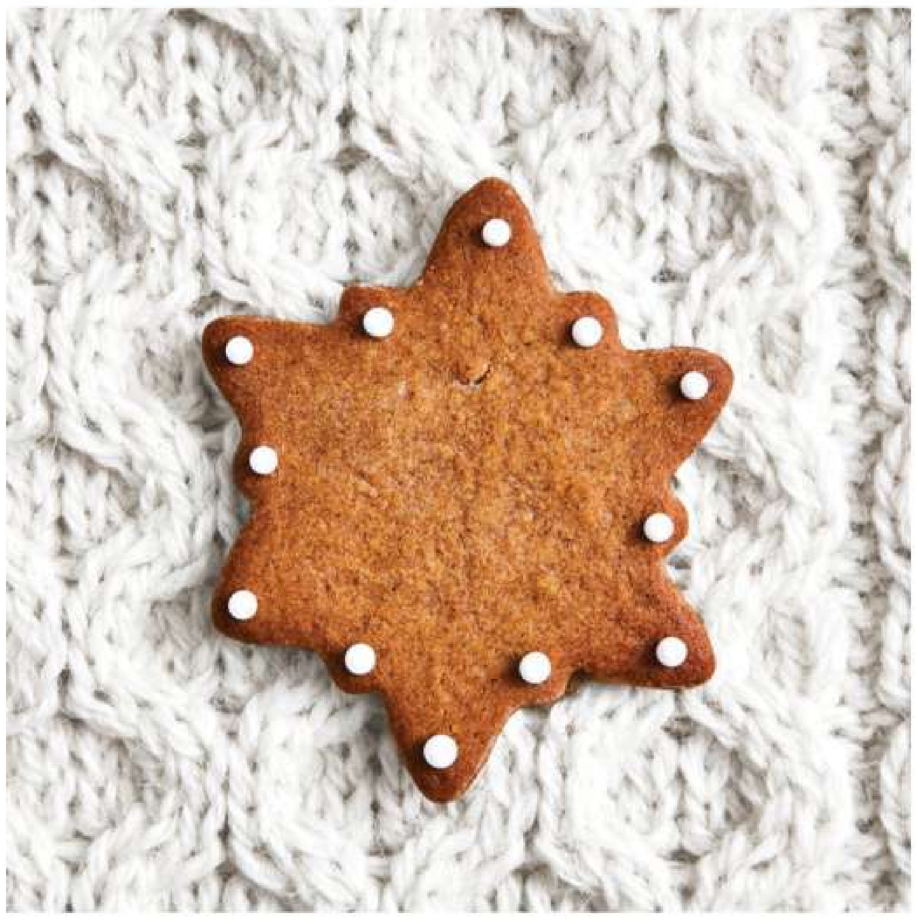


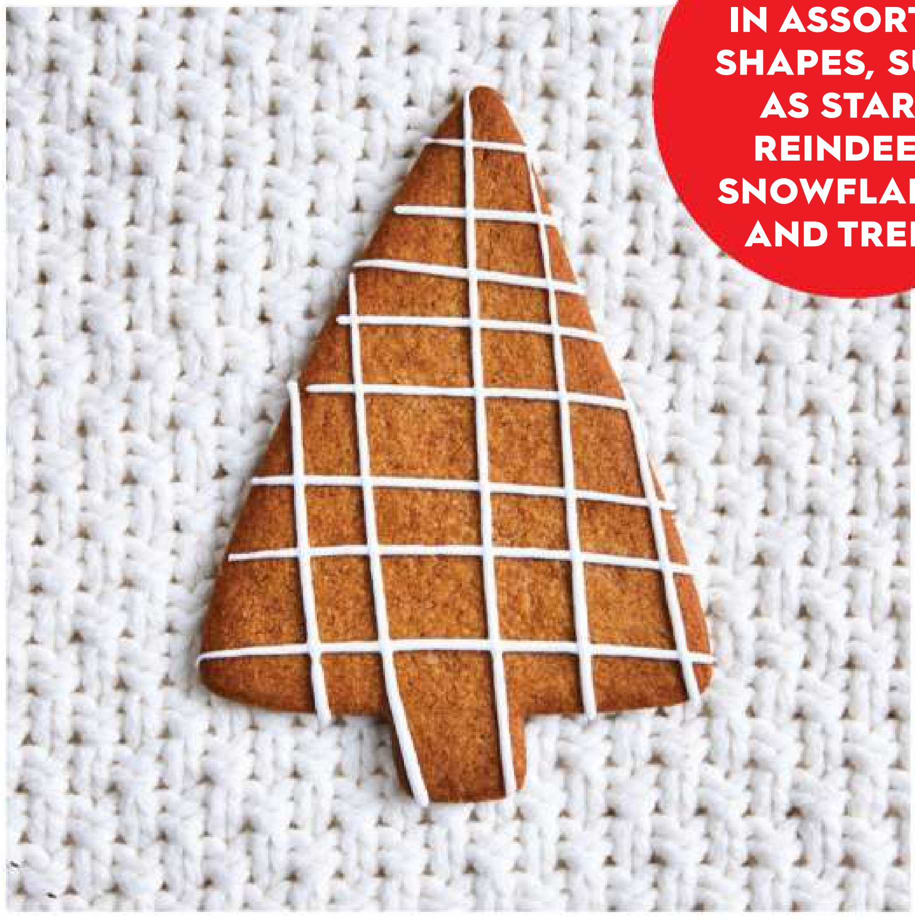


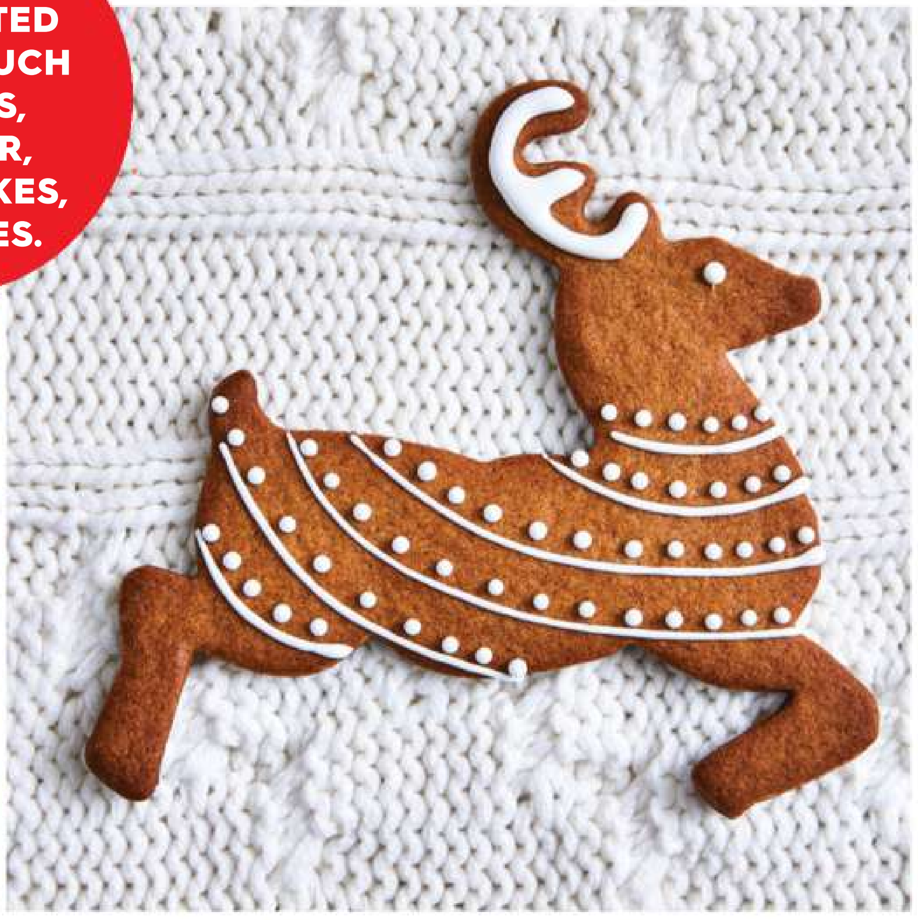




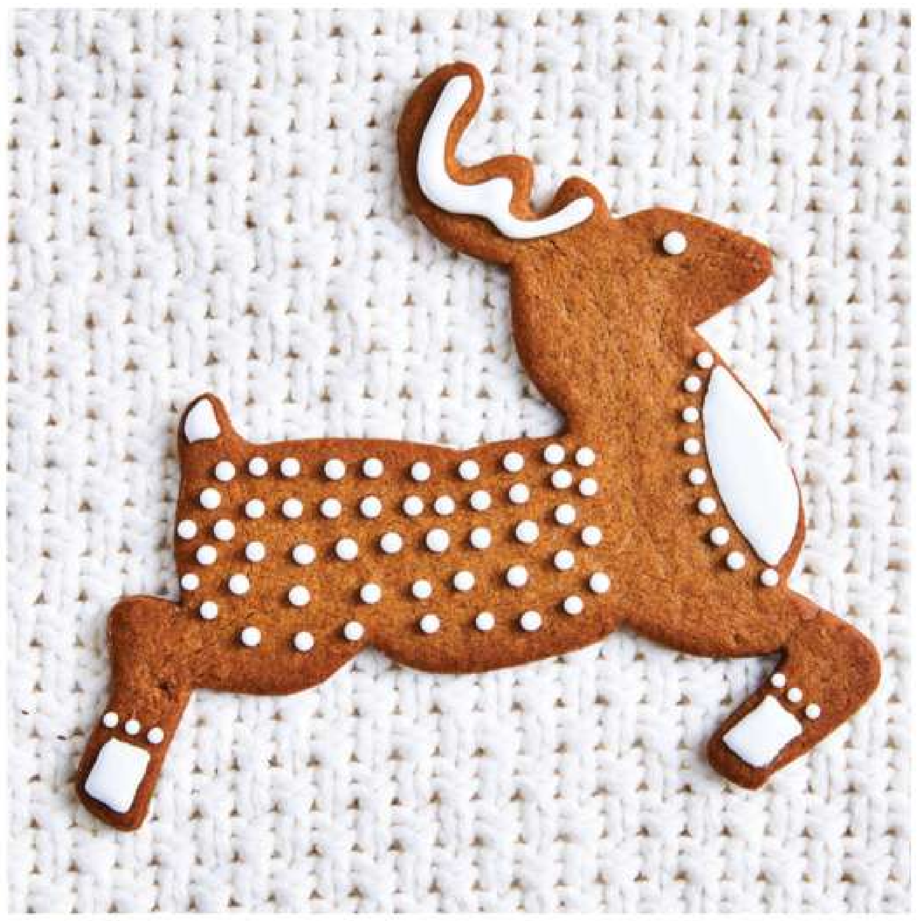








USE CUTTERS IN ASSORTED SHAPES, SUCH AS STARS, REINDEER, SNOWFLAKES, AND TREES.



BROWNED BUTTER CARDAMOM *Pepparkakor*

PREP 30 minutes
CHILL 2 hours
BAKE 6 minutes per batch at 375°F

1	**cup butter**
3	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
1	**Tbsp. ground cinnamon**
1	**tsp. ground ginger**
½	**tsp. ground cardamom**
½	**tsp. salt**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**cup packed brown sugar**
1	**egg**
¼	**cup milk**
¼	**cup molasses**
1	**recipe Royal Icing *(right)***

1. In a 10-inch skillet melt butter over medium-low 10 to 15 minutes or until butter turns golden brown. Immediately remove from heat. Pour into a large bowl. Chill about 1 hour or until firm.

2. In a medium bowl stir together the next six ingredients (through salt).

3. Beat browned butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add both sugars; beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, milk, and molasses. Gradually beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill about 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

4. Preheat oven to 375°F. On a 15×12-inch piece of parchment paper, use a floured rolling pin to roll one portion of dough at a time to ⅛ inch thick. Using 2- to 4-inch cookie cutters, cut out dough. Transfer parchment paper with cutouts to a cookie sheet. (This prevents cookies from tearing or stretching when you transfer them to cookie sheets.) Reroll scraps as needed.

5. Bake 6 to 8 minutes or until edges just begin to brown. Transfer parchment with cutouts to a wire rack to cool completely. Decorate with Royal Icing. **Makes 60 cookies.**

PER 2-INCH COOKIE *106 cal., 3 g fat (2 g sat. fat), 11 mg chol., 68 mg sodium, 19 g carb., 0 g fiber, 14 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

ROYAL *Icing*

START TO FINISH 15 minutes

4	**cups powdered sugar (about 1 lb.)**
3	**Tbsp. meringue powder**
½	**tsp. cream of tartar**
½	**cup warm water**
1	**tsp. vanilla**

In a large mixing bowl stir together powdered sugar, meringue powder, and cream of tartar. Add the water and vanilla. Beat with a mixer on low until combined. Beat on high 7 to 10 minutes or until icing is very stiff. If needed, beat in additional water to reach desired consistency for piping or flooding.* (When not using icing, keep it covered with plastic wrap or a damp paper towel to prevent it from drying out.) If desired, chill for up to 48 hours. Stir before using. **Makes 3 cups.**

***TIP** To flood an area with icing, as with the hooves or saddle on the reindeer *(opposite)*, pipe an outline of icing, then fill the area inside with icing. Spread with a small offset spatula if desired.

PER TBSP. *37 cal., 0 g fat, 0 mg chol., 0 mg sodium, 9 g carb., 0 g fiber, 9 g sugars, 0 g pro.*

MERINGUE POWDER

Meringue powder is a mixture of pasteurized egg whites, sugar, and edible gums. It is the secret ingredient to making royal icing dry quickly with a smooth, hard finish. Look for it in the baking aisle of large supermarkets or in the cake-decorating section of crafts supply stores.

USE THE RIGHT TIP

A piping tip with a small round opening is best for making thin lines and tiny dots. Make bigger dots and thicker lines by holding it in the same spot longer or moving it more slowly while piping frosting.

GOING TO *Extremes*

THESE ENORMOUS, OVERSTUFFED COOKIES ARE OVER-THE-TOP FANTASTIC WITH TASTY SECRETS TUCKED INSIDE.

JUMBO CARMELITA Cookies

PREP 20 minutes **CHILL** 30 minutes
BAKE 14 minutes at 375°F **STAND** 15 minutes

1	**cup butter, softened**
⅔	**cup packed brown sugar**
½	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**tsp. baking powder**
¼	**tsp. baking soda**
¼	**tsp. salt**
2	**eggs**
2	**tsp. vanilla**
2	**cups all-purpose flour**
2½	**cups regular rolled oats**
1	**cup semisweet chocolate chips**
12	**dark chocolate-covered caramel squares with sea salt, such as Dove**
1	**recipe Caramel Drizzle (optional)**

1. Line two cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add both sugars, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla. Beat in as much of the flour as you can. Stir in any remaining flour, the oats, and chocolate chips. Divide dough in half. Cover and chill 30 to 60 minutes or until dough is easy to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Shape each dough portion into 12 balls using 2 Tbsp. each. Place six balls on each cookie sheet, placing 2½ inches apart; flatten slightly. Top each with a caramel square. Top with remaining dough balls. Spread dough around caramel squares to cover completely.

3. Bake 14 to 16 minutes or until edges are golden brown, rotating sheets halfway through. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Drizzle cookies with Caramel Drizzle (if using); let stand about 15 minutes or until set. **Makes 12 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *477 cal., 24 g fat (14 g sat. fat), 72 mg chol., 242 mg sodium, 62 g carb., 4 g fiber, 33 g sugars, 6 g pro.*

CARAMEL DRIZZLE In a small bowl combine 8 vanilla caramels and 1 tsp. heavy cream. Microwave 1 to 1½ minutes or until caramels are melted, stirring every 30 seconds.

MAKE SURE TO COMPLETELY AND EVENLY COVER THE MINT PATTY WITH DOUGH FOR A GOOD SEAL.

MINT-STUFFED DARK CHOCOLATE *Cookies*

PREP 25 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes at 350°F

1½ cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
½ tsp. baking powder
⅛ tsp. salt
¼ cup butter, softened
¼ cup canola oil
½ cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
9 chocolate-covered cream-filled mint patties or chocolate sandwich cookies with green mint filling
Green sprinkles

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. In a medium bowl whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in oil, brown sugar, and granulated sugar until combined. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture. Stir in chopped chocolate.

2. Drop a rounded tablespoon of dough onto a prepared cookie sheet; flatten slightly. Top with a mint patty. Drop another rounded tablespoon of dough onto mint patty. Spread dough around mint patty to cover completely. Repeat with remaining dough and mint patties, placing 2½ inches apart on cookie sheets. Generously top with sprinkles.

3. Bake about 10 minutes or just until edges are set. Cool on cookie sheets 1 minute. Remove; cool completely on a wire rack.

Makes 9 cookies.

PER COOKIE *377 cal., 18 g fat (8 g sat. fat), 35 mg chol., 117 mg sodium, 53 g carb., 2 g fiber, 32 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

LET'S GET *festive!* MAKE THE HOLIDAYS MERRIER BY SWAPPING IN RED, GREEN, AND WHITE SPRINKLES.

STUFFED CONFETTI *Cookies*

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 10 minutes at 375°F

- **1 pkg. 2-layer-size white cake mix**
- **½ cup butter, melted**
- **⅓ cup colored sprinkles**
- **1 egg, lightly beaten**
- **10 purchased strawberry thumbprint cookies, such as Pepperidge Farm Verona cookies**

1. In a large bowl stir together cake mix, butter, sprinkles, and egg. If necessary, cover and chill 30 minutes or until dough is easy to handle.

2. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Drop a rounded tablespoon of dough onto a prepared cookie sheet; flatten into a circle slightly larger than a Verona cookie. Top with cookie. Drop another rounded tablespoon of dough onto cookie. Spread dough around cookie to cover completely. Repeat with remaining dough and cookies, placing 3 inches apart on cookie sheets.

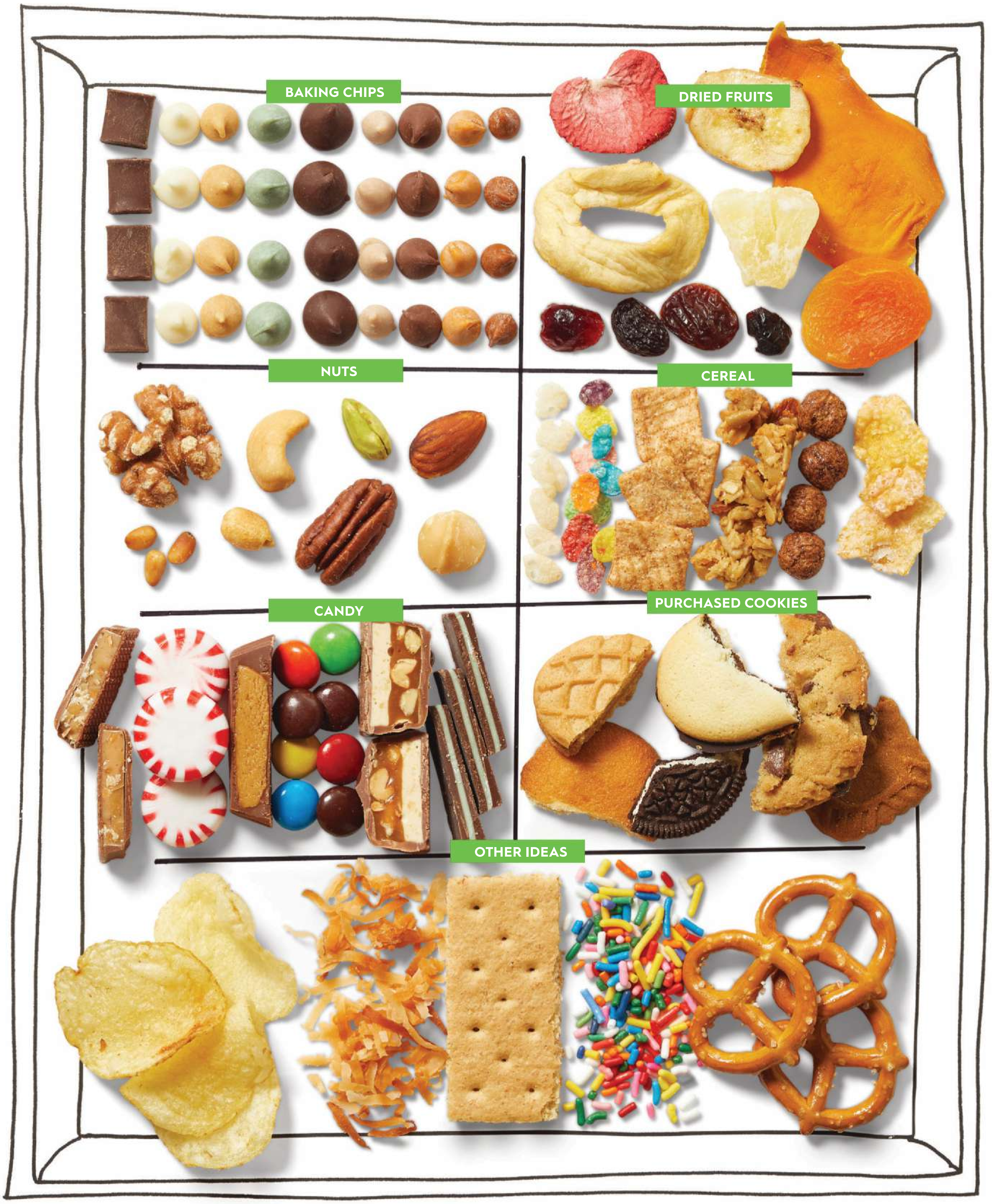
3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until bottoms are light brown. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 10 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *362 cal., 15 g fat (9 g sat. fat), 46 mg chol., 478 mg sodium, 50 g carb., 1 g fiber, 29 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

TWEAK A BASIC SCOOP-AND-DROP COOKIE DOUGH WITH YOUR FAVORITE MIX-INS AND PICK THE SHAPE—MINI OR GIANT COOKIES, SANDWICHES, OR BARS. YOUR IMAGINATION MAKES THEM YOUR OWN.

Dough MANY WAYS

BASIC DROP COOKIE DOUGH
P. 73



ALL THE POSSIBILITIES These are just some ideas for goodies to stir into Basic Drop Cookie Dough *(p. 73)*. Chop, snip, or break up cookies, nuts, candy, and dried fruit into the size pieces you like. Make them small for mini cookies but bigger for giant cookies.

BAKING CHIPS
chocolate, butterscotch, white chocolate, caramel, toffee, peanut butter, cherry, mint

DRIED FRUIT
chopped cranberries, raisins, mango, cherries, apricots, pineapple, bananas, apples

NUTS
chopped almonds, pecans, walnuts, macadamia nuts, pine nuts, peanuts, pistachios, cashews, mixed nuts, toasted if you like

CANDIES
chopped or crushed peppermints, layered chocolate-mint candies, chocolate and/or caramel candy bars, candy-coated milk chocolate pieces

CEREAL
chopped or crushed

PURCHASED COOKIES
chopped or crushed

OTHER IDEAS
tiny marshmallows, broken pretzels, sprinkles, coarsely crushed graham crackers, toasted shredded coconut, granola, crushed potato chips

PICK YOUR PORTION

MINI COOKIES

Drop dough by rounded teaspoons or a small cookie scoop 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 6 to 8 minutes. **Makes 72 cookies.**

STANDARD COOKIES

Follow recipe, *opposite*. **Makes 36 cookies.**

GIANT COOKIES

Using a ¼-cup measure or scoop, drop dough 4 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 12 to 14 minutes. **Makes 16 cookies.**

TRY THIS STIR-IN COMBO
¾ cup dark chocolate chips + ¾ cup chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed

TRY THIS STIR-IN COMBO
¾ cup fruit-flavored crisp rice cereal + ¾ cup white chocolate chips

TRY THIS STIR-IN COMBO
Add ¾ cup tiny marshmallows, ¾ cup milk chocolate chips, and ½ cup coarsely crushed graham crackers. Sprinkle top of bars with more marshmallows, chips, and crackers the last 2 to 3 minutes of baking.

Basic DROP COOKIE DOUGH

PREP 30 minutes
BAKE 12 minutes per batch at 375°F

1	cup butter, softened
1½	cups packed brown sugar
1	tsp. baking soda
¾	tsp. salt
2	eggs
1	Tbsp. vanilla
3	cups all-purpose flour
1½	to 2 cups desired stir-in ingredients *(p. 71)*

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add brown sugar, baking soda, and salt. Beat on medium 2 minutes, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour and desired stir-in ingredients.

2. Drop dough by rounded tablespoons 3 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or just until edges are light brown (cookies may not appear set). Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 36 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *158 cal., 8 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 24 mg chol., 132 mg sodium, 22 g carb., 1 g fiber, 13 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

SANDWICH COOKIES Use mini cookies. For filling, beat 1 cup softened butter with a mixer on medium until creamy. Beat in 4 cups powdered sugar, 2 Tbsp. heavy cream, 1 tsp. vanilla, and dash salt until creamy. If desired, tint with food coloring. Spread bottoms of half of the cookies with filling (about 1 Tbsp. each). Top with bottoms of remaining cookies. **Makes 36 sandwich cookies.**

BARS Reduce oven temperature to 350°F. Pat dough into a greased 13×9-inch pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until edges are browned and center appears set. **Makes 24 bars.**

FLAVORS OF *Mexico*

THESE SIMPLE, BUTTERY *GALLETAS* (COOKIES) ARE LACED WITH WARMING FLAVORS—AROMATIC CINNAMON AND ANISE, KICKY CHILES, TANGY CITRUS, AND SHOTS OF TEQUILA AND RUMCHATA.

CITRUS RUMCHATA Biscochitos

PREP 30 minutes
CHILL 1 hour
BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 350°F

¾	**cup + 2 Tbsp. sugar**
1	**Tbsp. orange zest**
1	**tsp. anise seeds, crushed**
1½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1½	**cups whole wheat flour or all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
¾	**cup butter, softened**
½	**cup coconut oil or canola oil**
1	**egg**
3	**Tbsp. Rumchata liqueur**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
1	**tsp. ground cinnamon**

1. In a food processor or blender combine ¾ cup of the sugar, the orange zest, and anise seeds. Cover and pulse until mixture is sandy and fragrant. In a medium bowl stir together the flours, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a large bowl beat butter, coconut oil, and sugar mixture with a mixer on medium to high until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Add egg, Rumchata, and vanilla. Beat until combined. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Stir in any remaining flour mixture. Divide dough in half and shape into disks. Wrap and chill 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough at a time to ¼ inch thick. Using a 2½-inch cookie cutter, cut out dough. Place cutouts 1 inch apart on prepared cookie sheets. Reroll scraps as needed. In a small bowl combine the remaining 2 Tbsp. sugar and the cinnamon; sprinkle over cutouts.
4. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until bottoms are golden brown. Remove; cool on a wire rack.
Makes 36 cookies.

PER COOKIE *121 cal., 7 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 79 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 1 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

TRADITIONAL *cinnamon- and anise-flavored* BISCOCHITOS ARE THE STATE COOKIE OF NEW MEXICO. FOR A NEW SPIN, WE ADDED RUMCHATA— A LIQUEUR THAT IS A BLEND OF RUM AND HORCHATA.

SPICED Polvorones

PREP 40 minutes
BAKE 5 minutes at 350°F +
15 minutes per batch at 325°F
CHILL 1 hour

- **1½ cups almond flour**
- **1½ cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 cup butter, softened**
- **1 cup powdered sugar**
- **1 Tbsp. milk**
- **1½ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **¾ tsp. ground cardamom**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread almond flour and all purpose flour evenly in separate shallow baking pans. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until light golden brown, stirring once or twice. In a bowl combine flours; cool to room temperature.

2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add ½ cup of the powdered sugar. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in milk, 1 tsp. of the cinnamon, the cardamom, and vanilla until combined. Beat in cooled flour mixture. Cover and chill 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

3. Preheat oven to 325°F. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to ½ inch thick. Using 2-inch cookie cutters, cut out dough. Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Reroll scraps as needed.

4. Bake about 15 minutes or until bottoms are light brown. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

5. Before serving, in a small bowl combine the remaining ½ cup powdered sugar and ½ tsp. cinnamon. Sprinkle over cooled cookies. **Makes 32 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *118 cal., 8 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 15 mg chol., 46 mg sodium, 10 g carb., 1 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

THE DELIGHTFULLY CRUMBLY *shortbread texture of polvorones* PAIRS UP WITH BACKGROUND FLAVORS OF CINNAMON AND CARDAMOM.
FOR A FESTIVE TOUCH, PLACE STENCILS OR DOILIES OVER COOKIES BEFORE SIFTING WITH THE POWDERED SUGAR MIXTURE.

PALOMA Bars

PREP 30 minutes
CHILL 45 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F and 25 minutes at 300°F

1 cup butter
½ cup powdered sugar
1 Tbsp. lime zest
2 cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups granulated sugar
2 Tbsp. grapefruit zest
½ cup grapefruit juice
2 Tbsp. tequila or lime juice
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 egg yolk
Powdered sugar (optional)
Sugared Zest (optional) *(left)*

1. In a small heavy saucepan heat butter over medium 8 to 10 minutes or until butter turns golden brown, stirring occasionally. Immediately pour butter into a large bowl; loosely cover and chill 45 minutes, stirring twice.

2. For crust, preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Add powdered sugar to cooled browned butter; beat with a mixer on medium until blended. Beat in lime zest. Gradually add 1¾ cups of the flour, beating until just combined. Spread into bottom and ½ inch up sides of prepared pan; press firmly. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown.

3. Meanwhile, for filling, in a medium bowl whisk together granulated sugar and the remaining ¼ cup flour. Stir in grapefruit zest, grapefruit juice, and tequila until sugar is dissolved. Add eggs, egg yolk, and a dash *salt*; whisk until well combined. Pour over hot crust.

4. Reduce oven to 300°F. Bake 25 minutes more or just until filling is set. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use foil to remove; cut into bars. Before serving, if you like, top with powdered sugar and Sugared Zest. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to one week.

Makes 24 bars.

PER BAR *181 cal., 9 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 51 mg chol., 276 mg sodium, 24 g carb., 0 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

SUGARED ZEST

Add a garnish to your bars like you would your Paloma cocktail. Remove a section of grapefruit peel; scrape off white pith. Cut peel into thin strips. In a saucepan bring ½ cup sugar and ½ cup water to a simmer. Add peel. Simmer 5 minutes; strain. Lay flat and let dry about 5 minutes. Toss in additional sugar.

MASA HARINA *Thumbprints* WITH CAJETA

PREP 40 minutes
BAKE 12 minutes per batch at 375°F

2	**Tbsp. instant espresso coffee powder**
½	**cup hot water**
½	**cup butter, softened**
¾	**cup sugar**
½	**tsp. baking soda**
½	**tsp. salt**
2	**cups masa harina**
⅔	**cup cajeta or dulce de leche**

1. In a small bowl combine espresso powder and the hot water until espresso powder dissolves. Cool to room temperature. Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease cookie sheets.

2. In a large bowl beat butter, sugar, baking soda, and salt with a mixer on medium to high until light and fluffy. Beat in masa harina alternately with cooled espresso until well blended.

3. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 1 inch apart on prepared cookie sheets. Press your thumb into center of each ball.

4. Bake about 12 minutes or until bottoms are light brown. If cookie centers have puffed up during baking, press again with the back of a small spoon. Remove; cool on a wire rack. Before serving, fill centers with cajeta and sprinkle with additional espresso powder. **Makes 72 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *42 cal., 2 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 4 mg chol., 39 mg sodium, 7 g carb., 0 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

MASA HARINA

Masa harina is a specialized corn flour used for making tortillas. Cornmeal is not a suitable substitute since it lacks the distinctive flavor of masa harina.

DULCE DE LECHE & CAJETA

Dulce de leche is a sweet caramel sauce made from milk.

Cajeta is a type of dulce de leche made with goat's milk for special flavor. Find it online or in specialty stores.

CHOCOLATE-ANCHO Crinkles

PREP 35 minutes
COOL 15 minutes
CHILL 2 hours
BAKE 9 minutes per batch at 375°F

4	**oz. unsweetened chocolate, chopped**
⅓	**cup avocado oil or canola oil**
3	**eggs, lightly beaten**
2	**cups granulated sugar**
2	**tsp. baking powder**
2	**tsp. vanilla**
1	**tsp. ancho chile powder**
¾	**tsp. ground cinnamon**
½	**tsp. salt**
1¾	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup buckwheat flour or whole wheat flour**
⅔	**cup powdered sugar**

1. In a small saucepan heat and stir chocolate and oil over low until melted and smooth. Cool 15 minutes.
2. In a large bowl combine eggs, granulated sugar, baking powder, vanilla, ¾ teaspoon of the ancho chile powder, ½ teaspoon of the cinnamon, and the salt. Stir in chocolate mixture. Gradually stir in flours until well combined. Cover and chill 2 hours or until dough is easy to handle.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease cookie sheets. In a small bowl combine powdered sugar and the remaining ¼ tsp. each ancho chile powder and cinnamon.
4. Shape dough into 1¼-inch balls. Roll balls in powdered sugar mixture to coat well. Place balls 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or just until edges are firm and cracks appear slightly moist. Remove; cool on wire racks. **Makes 60 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *73 cal., 2 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 9 mg chol., 43 mg sodium, 12 g carb., 0 g fiber, 8 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

JUST ADD *Java*

COOKIES GET CAFFEINATED! INSTEAD OF DUNKING COOKIES IN YOUR CUP OF JOE, YOU'LL FIND THE COFFEE FLAVOR IS INSIDE THESE MADE-TO-ORDER TREATS.

PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE CHEWY SUGAR COOKIES
P. 84

PEPPERMINT WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE THUMBPRINTS

P. 84

COFFEE TALK

What's your coffee personality? Are you a dark- or light-roast kind of person?

INSTANT ESPRESSO coffee powder, which is very finely ground and dissolves readily, contributes a deep, rich flavor to cookie and bar recipes. Look for it in the coffee aisle of large supermarkets.

INSTANT COFFEE CRYSTALS are coarser-looking than espresso powder but still easily dissolve. They will deliver a lighter-roast coffee flavor to cookies.

WHAT IS DALGONA COFFEE?
Thick, creamy dalgona is made by whisking or beating equal parts instant coffee, sugar, and warm water until fluffy. As a drink, it's used to top hot or cold milk. Here, it tops sweet little tarts.

DALGONA COFFEE *Tarts*

PREP 25 minutes **BAKE** 12 minutes at 350°F **CHILL** 2 hours

- **½ cup plus 3 Tbsp. butter, softened**
- **⅔ cup mascarpone cheese**
- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **3 Tbsp. heavy cream**
- **2¼ cups powdered sugar**
- **2 Tbsp. granulated sugar**
- **2 Tbsp. instant espresso coffee powder or instant coffee crystals**
- **2 Tbsp. warm water**
- **Unsweetened cocoa powder (optional)**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium bowl beat ½ cup of the butter and ⅓ cup of the mascarpone with a mixer on medium until combined. Stir in flour. Knead gently by hand until smooth. Shape dough into 24 balls. Press balls into bottoms and up sides of 24 ungreased 1¾-inch muffin cups.

2. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until golden. If necessary, use the rounded side of a teaspoon to press centers of crusts down. Cool in pan 5 minutes. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

3. For filling, in a medium bowl beat the remaining 3 Tbsp. butter and ⅓ cup mascarpone with a mixer on medium until smooth. Beat in cream until combined. Beat in powdered sugar until fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Fill cooled tarts with mascarpone mixture. Cover and chill 2 to 24 hours or until set.

4. For topping, up to 2 hours before serving, in a small bowl combine granulated sugar, coffee powder, and the warm water. Beat with a mixer on medium or whisk vigorously about 2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Spoon or pipe topping on tarts. Sift cocoa powder (if using) over tarts. Serve immediately or chill up to 2 hours. **Makes 24 tarts.**

To Store Place unfilled tarts in an airtight container; cover. Store in the refrigerator up to 3 days. Store unfilled tarts in freezer up to 3 months. Fill and top tarts as directed in steps 2 and 3.

PER TART *149 cal., 9 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 25 mg chol., 45 mg sodium, 17 g carb., 0 g fiber, 12 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

COFFEE COOKIE Bars

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 25 minutes at 350°F

1	**14-oz. can (1¼ cups) sweetened condensed milk**
1	**Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. instant espresso coffee powder or instant coffee crystals**
1	**Tbsp. milk or heavy cream**
1	**cup butter, melted**
2	**eggs**
1¼	**cups packed brown sugar**
½	**cup granulated sugar**
1	**Tbsp. vanilla**
3	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
1	**tsp. salt**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with parchment paper or foil, extending paper over edges.
2. In a small bowl stir together sweetened condensed milk and 1 tablespoon of the coffee powder. Reserve ¼ cup of the milk mixture.
3. In a large bowl stir together the remaining 2 tsp. coffee powder and the milk. Add butter, eggs, sugars, and vanilla; stir until well combined. Stir in flour, baking soda, and salt until combined. Reserve 1 cup dough. Spread or pat the remaining dough evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Pour the remaining milk mixture over dough, spreading evenly. Crumble the reserved 1 cup dough over top.
4. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until golden. Brush the reserved ¼ cup milk mixture over warm bars. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use parchment paper to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars.
Makes 36 bars.

PER BAR *165 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 28 mg chol., 161 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 0 g fiber, 16 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

YOUR *after-dinner coffee hour* IS CALLING FOR A PLATTER OF THESE COFFEE-SPIKED COOKIES AND BARS.

PEPPERMINT WHITE HOT CHOCOLATE *Thumbprints*

Pictured on *p. 81.*

PREP 30 minutes **BAKE** 8 minutes at 375°F **CHILL** 30 minutes

4	**oz. white baking chocolate, chopped**
¾	**cup heavy cream**
¾	**tsp. peppermint extract**
1	**cup butter, softened**
¾	**cup powdered sugar**
¼	**cup packed brown sugar**
1	**egg yolk**
2	**oz. white baking chocolate, melted**
2½	**cups all-purpose flour**
1	**Tbsp. instant espresso coffee powder or instant coffee crystals**
½	**tsp. baking powder**
½	**tsp. salt**
	Melted white baking chocolate (optional)
¼	**cup crushed peppermint candies**

1. For filling, place chopped white chocolate in a medium bowl. In a small saucepan heat cream over medium just until steaming. Pour hot cream over chocolate; stir until chocolate is melted and smooth. Stir in ½ tsp. of the peppermint extract. Cover and chill in the freezer 30 to 45 minutes or until well chilled and slightly firm to the touch.

2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl beat butter and both sugars with a mixer on medium 1 minute. Add egg yolk, the melted white chocolate, and the remaining ¼ tsp. peppermint extract. Beat on low just until combined. In a medium bowl whisk together flour, coffee powder, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add to butter mixture, beating on low just until combined. If necessary, knead by hand until dough comes together.

3. Shape dough into balls using 1 Tbsp. each. Place 1 inch apart on prepared cookie sheets. Press your thumb into center of each ball. Reshape as needed. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until cookies are set and beginning to brown. If cookie centers puff up during baking, press again with the back of a small spoon. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

4. Drizzle cookies with additional melted white chocolate (if using); let set. Beat chilled filling with a mixer on medium until the consistency of frosting. Spoon or pipe filling into cookies. Sprinkle with crushed peppermint candies. **Makes 40 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *127 cal., 8 g fat (5 g sat. fat), 23 mg chol., 77 mg sodium, 13 g carb., 0 g fiber, 7 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

PUMPKIN SPICE LATTE CHEWY SUGAR *Cookies*

Pictured on *p. 80.*

PREP 20 minutes

BAKE 10 minutes per batch at 325°F

½	**cup butter, softened**
½	**cup canned pumpkin**
2¼	**cups sugar**
1	**Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. instant espresso coffee powder or instant coffee crystals**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
1	**tsp. cream of tartar**
1	**tsp. pumpkin pie spice**
½	**tsp. salt**
2	**egg yolks**
3	**Tbsp. heavy cream**
2¼	**cups all-purpose flour**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add pumpkin, 2 cups of the sugar, 1 Tbsp. of the coffee powder, the baking soda, cream of tartar, ½ tsp. of the pumpkin pie spice, and the salt. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg yolks and 1 Tbsp. of the cream. Beat in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in remaining flour.

2. In a small bowl stir together the remaining ¼ cup sugar, 1 tsp. coffee powder, and ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice. Place the remaining 2 Tbsp. cream in another small bowl. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll balls in cream then in sugar mixture to coat. Place balls 2 inches apart on prepared cookie sheets.

3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are set. Cool on cookie sheets 2 minutes (cookies will fall and crackle as they cool). Remove; cool on a wire rack. **Makes 68 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *58 cal., 2 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 10 mg chol., 47 mg sodium, 10 g carb., 0 g fiber, 7 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

DARK CHOCOLATE *Rounds* WITH ESPRESSO BUTTERCREAM

PREP 25 minutes

BAKE 9 minutes per batch at 375°F

1½	**cups butter, softened**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
½	**cup packed brown sugar**
1	**tsp. baking soda**
1	**egg**
¼	**cup milk**
2	**tsp. vanilla**
2¼	**cups all-purpose flour**
1½	**cups finely chopped dark chocolate**
2	**cups powdered sugar**
1	**Tbsp. instant espresso coffee powder or instant coffee crystals**
2	**Tbsp. heavy cream**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl beat 1 cup of the butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in granulated and brown sugars and baking soda until light and fluffy, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, milk, and 1 tsp. of the vanilla until combined. Beat in flour. Stir in chocolate.

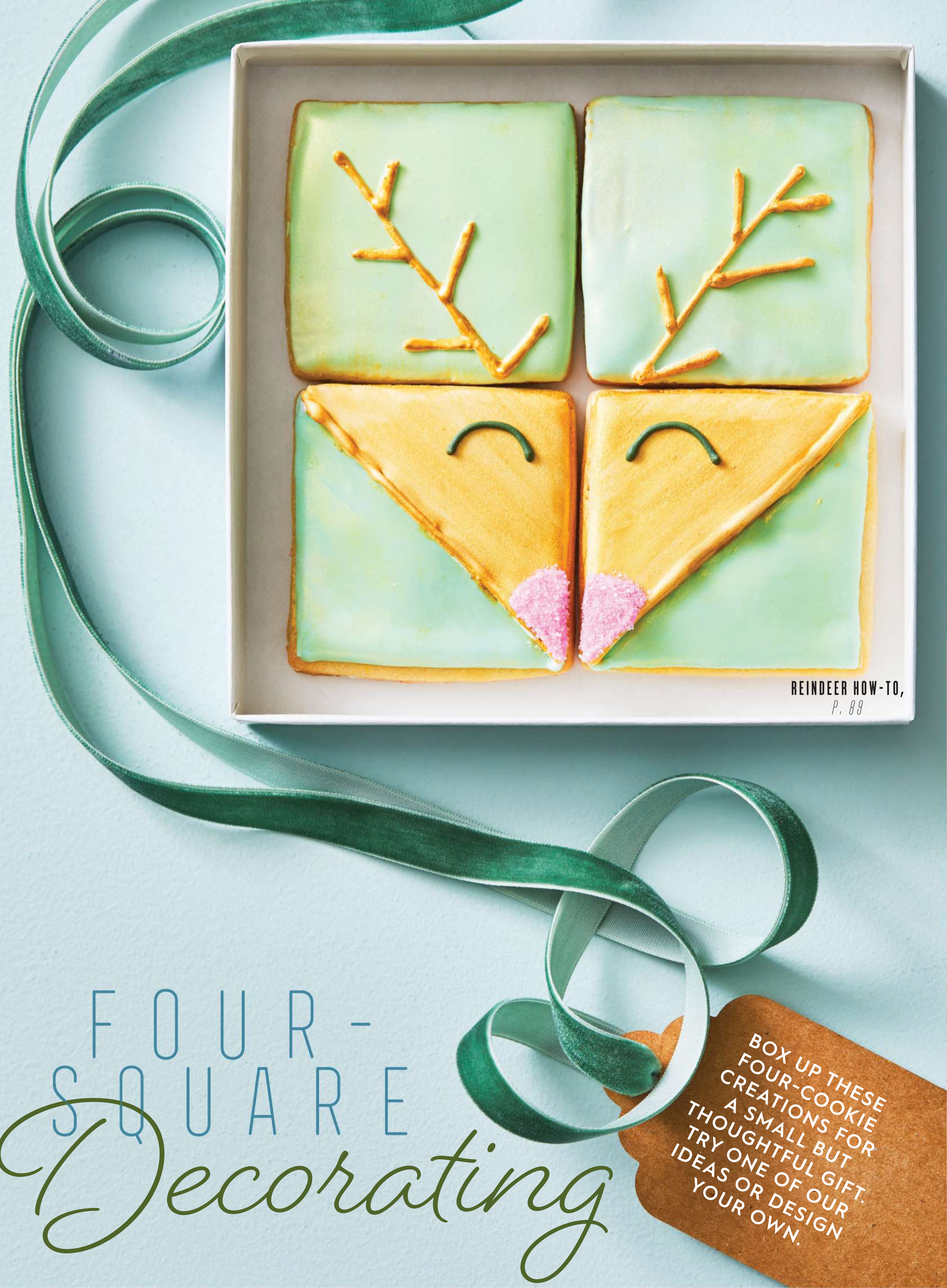
2. Drop dough by tablespoons 2 inches apart on prepared cookies sheets. Bake 9 to 11 minutes or until browned. Cool on sheets 2 minutes. Remove; cool completely on a wire rack.

3. For filling, in a medium bowl beat the remaining ½ cup butter with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Beat in 1 cup of the powdered sugar and the coffee powder. Beat in 1 Tbsp. of the cream and the remaining 1 tsp. vanilla. Beat in the remaining 1 cup powdered sugar and 1 Tbsp. cream until fluffy.

4. Spread bottoms of half of the cookies with filling. Top with bottoms of remaining cookies. **Makes 24 sandwich cookies.**

PER SANDWICH COOKIE *300 cal., 17 g fat (10 g sat. fat), 40 mg chol., 150 mg sodium, 38 g carb., 1 g fiber, 27 g sugars, 2 g pro.*

DARK CHOCOLATE ROUNDS
WITH ESPRESSO BUTTERCREAM



REINDEER HOW-TO, *P. 88*

FOUR-SQUARE *Decorating*

BOX UP THESE FOUR-COOKIE CREATIONS FOR A SMALL BUT THOUGHTFUL GIFT. TRY ONE OF OUR IDEAS OR DESIGN YOUR OWN.

4-SQUARE *Cutouts*

PREP 25 minutes **BAKE** 10 minutes per batch at 375°F

1½	**cups butter, softened**
1	**cup granulated sugar**
¼	**tsp. baking powder**
1	**egg**
1	**tsp. vanilla**
1	**tsp. almond extract (optional)**
¾	**tsp. salt**
3½	**cups all-purpose flour**
	Royal Icing *(p. 63)*
	Assorted sprinkles and/or colored sugars (optional)

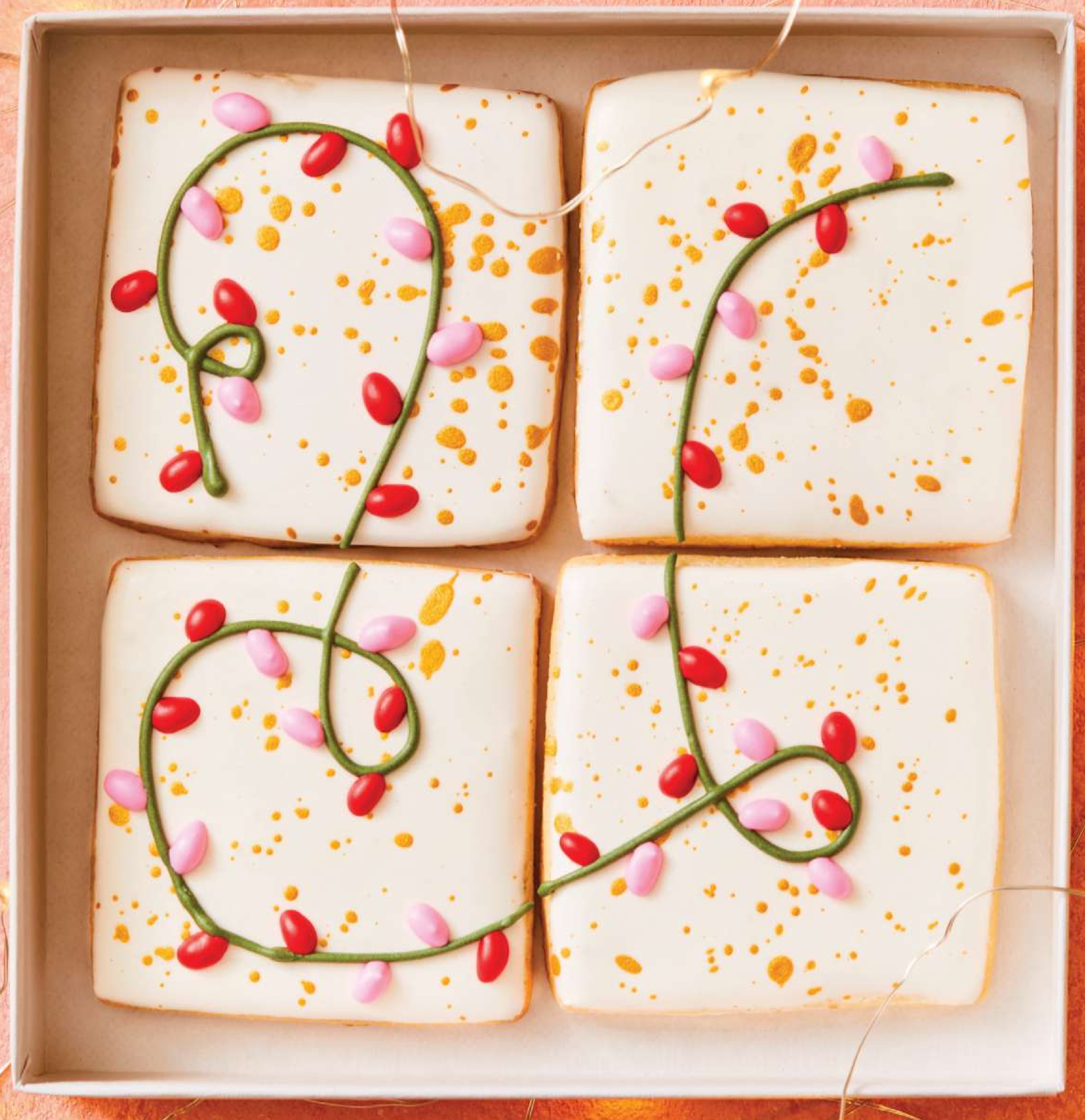
1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat butter with a mixer on medium to high 30 seconds. Add sugar and baking powder. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in egg, vanilla, and almond extract (if using). Beat in salt and as much of the flour as you can. Stir in any remaining flour. Divide dough into four portions.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough at a time into a 12½×5-inch rectangle. Using a knife or 2½-inch square cutter, cut into ten 2½-inch squares. Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets.

3. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until edges are firm and bottoms are lightly browned. Remove; cool on wire racks.

4. Decorate as desired with Royal Icing. Allow icing to set. Arrange cookie squares in 6-inch square gift boxes that are 1 inch deep. **Makes 40 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *102 cal., 6 g fat (4 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 86 mg sodium, 11 g carb., 0 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 1 g pro.*



SHAPE IT UP

To ensure straight edges when moving cookies to cookie sheet, roll dough portions between sheets of waxed or parchment paper. Slide the uncut paper-sandwiched dough onto a cookie sheet (you can stack rolled-out portions of dough). Freeze at least 1 hour. Remove top pieces of paper, cut dough, and transfer cutouts to cookie sheets as directed.

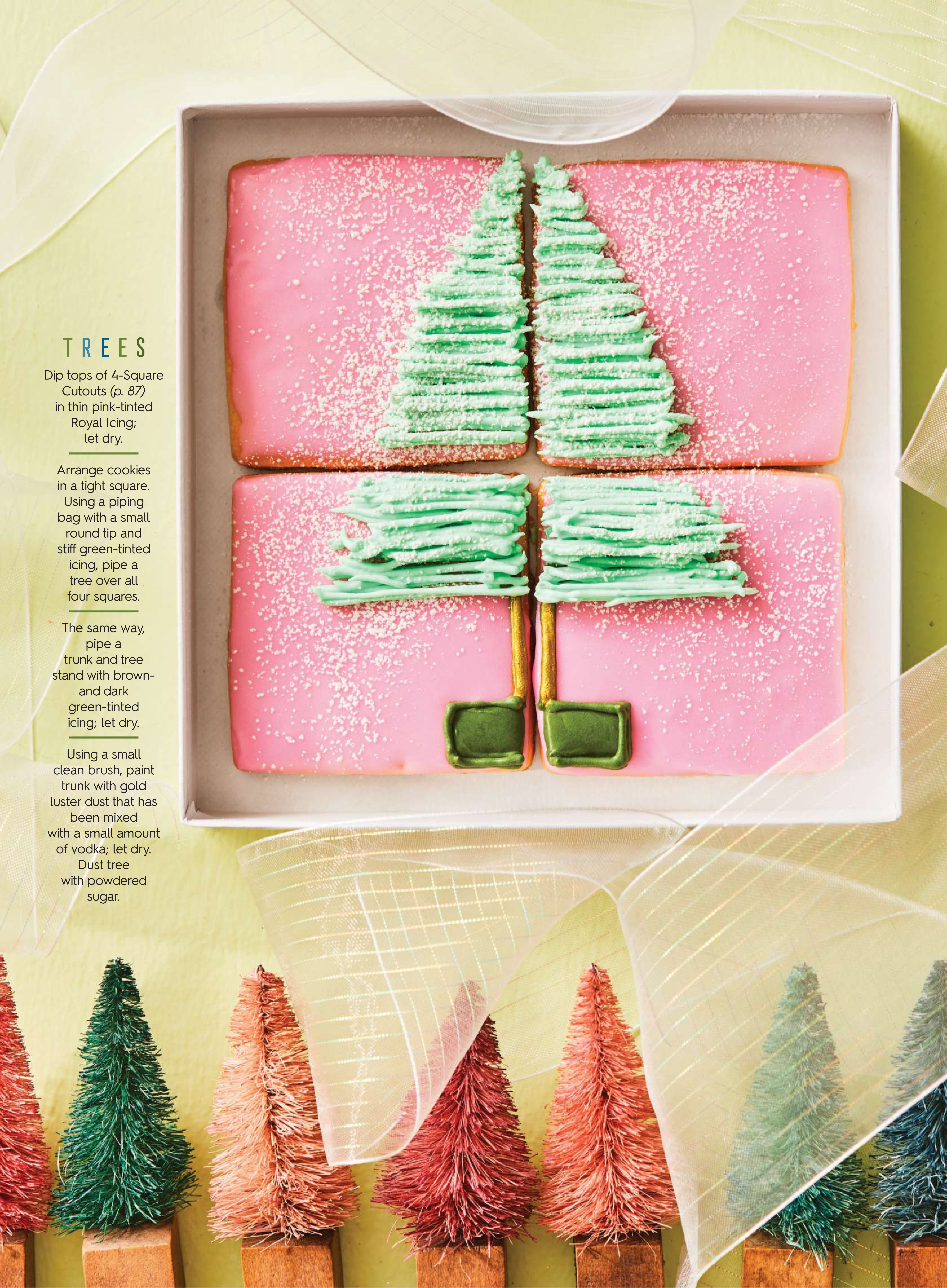
LIGHTS

Dip tops of 4-Square Cutouts *(above)* in thin white Royal Icing; let dry.

Arrange cookies in a tight square. Using a small clean brush, splatter cookies with gold luster dust that has been mixed with a small amount of vodka; let dry.

Using a piping bag with a small round tip and stiff green-tinted icing, pipe a cord for lights over all squares; let dry.

Using piping bags with small round tips and stiff icing tinted in desired colors, pipe lights on cord; let dry.



TREES

Dip tops of 4-Square Cutouts *(p. 87)* in thin pink-tinted Royal Icing; let dry.

Arrange cookies in a tight square. Using a piping bag with a small round tip and stiff green-tinted icing, pipe a tree over all four squares.

The same way, pipe a trunk and tree stand with brown- and dark green-tinted icing; let dry.

Using a small clean brush, paint trunk with gold luster dust that has been mixed with a small amount of vodka; let dry. Dust tree with powdered sugar.

GIFTS

Dip tops of 4-Square Cutouts *(p. 87)* in thin white Royal Icing; let dry.

Using a small clean brush or cotton swab, paint designs for wrapping paper on cookies using luster dust and/or paste food coloring that has been mixed with small amounts of vodka; let dry.

Using a piping bag with a small round tip and stiff icing tinted to desired color, pipe ribbons or string on packages.

REINDEER

Pictured on *p. 86*.

Dip tops of two 4-Square Cutouts *(p. 87)* in thin mint green-tinted Royal Icing; let dry.

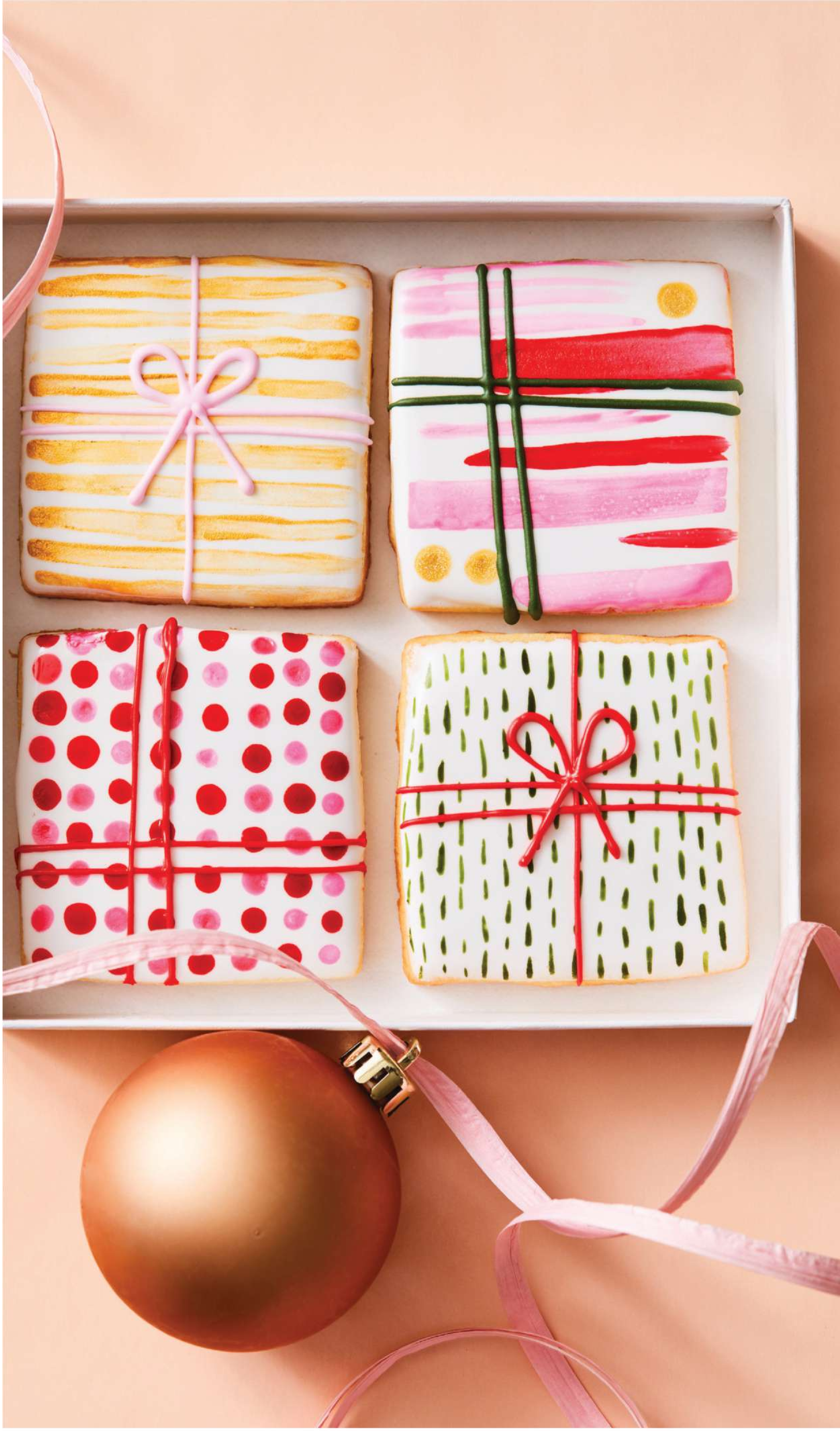
Using a piping bag with a small round tip, pipe thin mint green-tinted icing over diagonal halves of the remaining two cookies. In the same way, pipe thin white icing over the empty diagonal halves; let dry.

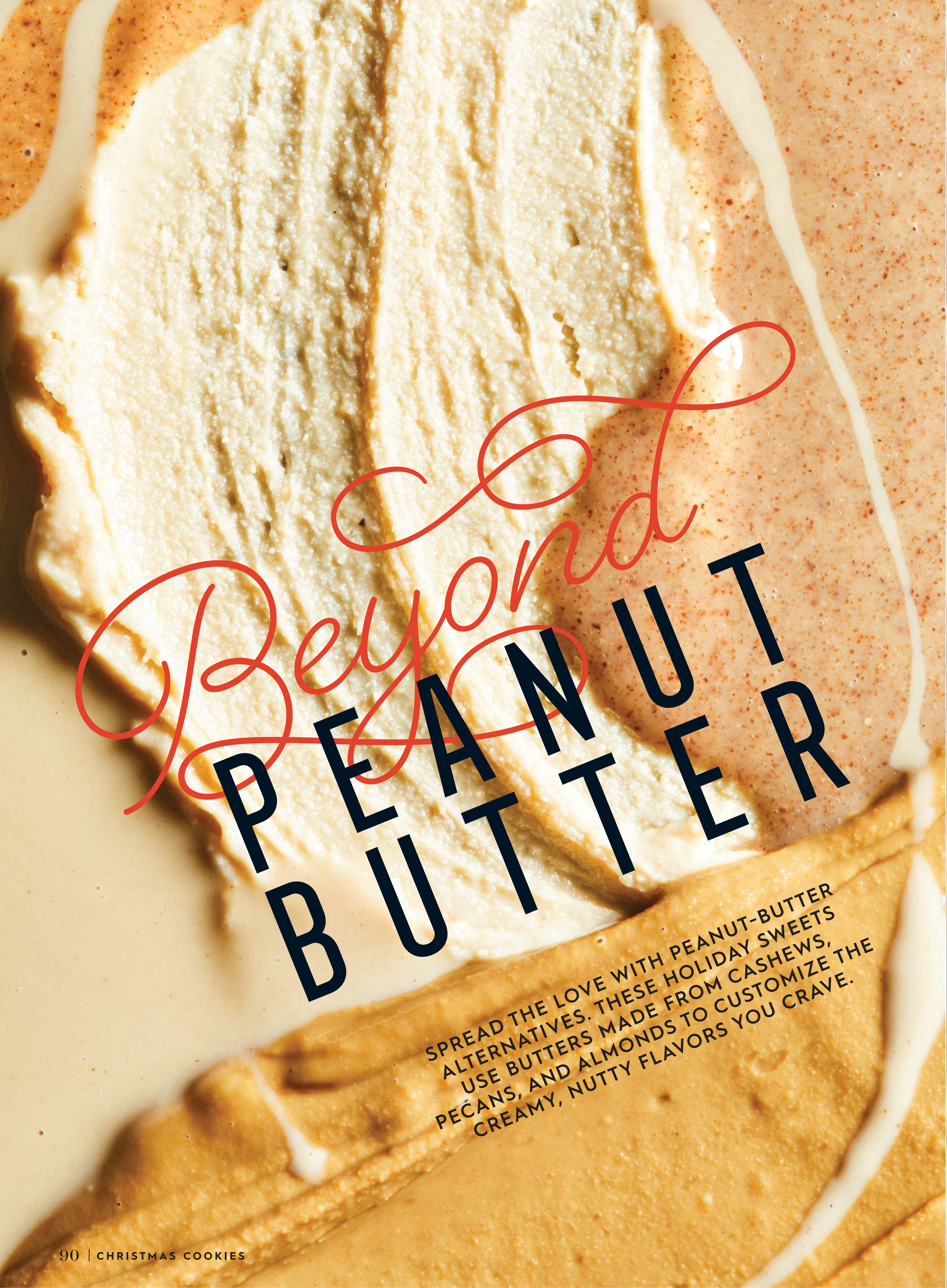
Arrange cookies in a tight square with the white portions touching in the bottom quadrants.

Using a small clean brush, paint dry luster dust over green portions. Using stiff white icing, pipe antlers on top cookies; let dry.

Using a small clean brush, paint all of the white icing with gold luster dust that has been mixed with a small amount of vodka; let dry.

Using black-tinted icing, pipe eyes on gold portions. Using pink-tinted icing, pipe nose at bottom of reindeer face and sprinkle with pink sugar; let dry.





Beyond PEANUT BUTTER

SPREAD THE LOVE WITH PEANUT-BUTTER ALTERNATIVES. THESE HOLIDAY SWEETS USE BUTTERS MADE FROM CASHEWS, PECANS, AND ALMONDS TO CUSTOMIZE THE CREAMY, NUTTY FLAVORS YOU CRAVE.

Cashew BUTTER COOKIES

PREP 30 minutes
BAKE 7 minutes per batch at 375°F

- **1 cup homemade *(p. 93)* or natural cashew butter**
- **½ cup butter, softened**
- **½ cup shortening**
- **1 cup packed brown sugar**
- **½ cup granulated sugar**
- **1 tsp. baking soda**
- **1 tsp. baking powder**
- **1 tsp. orange zest**
- **2 eggs**
- **1 tsp. vanilla**
- **2¼ cups all-purpose flour**
- **Optional stir-ins: 1 cup chopped dried apricots, white chocolate chips, and/or chopped cashews**
- **Coarse salt**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large bowl beat cashew butter, butter, and shortening with a mixer on medium 30 seconds. Add sugars, baking soda, baking powder, and orange zest. Beat until combined, scraping bowl as needed. Beat in eggs and vanilla until combined. Beat in as much of the flour as you can. Stir in any remaining flour. Stir in, if using, apricots, white chocolate chips, and/or cashews.

2. Shape dough into 1¼-inch balls. Roll balls in additional granulated sugar to coat. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Flatten balls slightly by pressing crisscross marks with the tines of a fork or flatten with fingers. Lightly sprinkle with coarse salt.

3. Bake 7 to 9 minutes or until edges are light brown. Cool 1 minute on cookie sheets. Remove; cool on a wire rack.

Makes 75 cookies.

PER COOKIE *76 cal., 4 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 8 mg chol., 52 mg sodium, 8 g carb., 0 g fiber, 4 g sugars, 1 g pro.*

Almond BUTTER SHORTBREAD

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes per batch at 300°F

1	**cup + 2 Tbsp. butter, softened**
½	**cup homemade *(opposite)* or natural almond butter**
½	**cup packed brown sugar**
½	**tsp. almond extract**
2	**cups all-purpose flour**
¼	**cup cornstarch**
½	**tsp. salt**
8	**oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped**
	Chocolate sprinkles (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. In a large bowl beat 1 cup of the butter, the almond butter, brown sugar, and almond extract with a mixer on medium until well combined. In a medium bowl stir together flour, cornstarch, and salt. Gradually add flour mixture to almond mixture, beating on low until combined. Divide dough in half.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll or pat one dough portion into a 10×6-inch rectangle. Cut into 2-inch squares or use 2-inch desired-shape cookie cutters. Place cutouts 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Repeat with remaining dough portion.

3. Bake 20 to 23 minutes or until bottoms begin to brown. Remove; cool on wire racks.

4. In a small bowl combine chocolate and the remaining 2 Tbsp. butter. Microwave at 30-second intervals, stirring after each, until chocolate is melted.

5. Dip a portion of each cookie into melted chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Place on parchment paper or waxed paper. Add chocolate sprinkles (if using). Let stand until set. **Makes 30 cookies.**

PER COOKIE *175 cal., 13 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 18 mg chol., 95 mg sodium, 15 g carb., 2 g fiber, 6 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

HOMEMADE *Nut Butter*

START TO FINISH 25 minutes

2 cups raw nuts, such as almonds, cashews, pecans, or sunflower seed kernels
½ tsp. salt (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place nuts in a shallow baking pan. Bake 7 to 15 minutes or until just starting to toast (time will vary depending on the type of nut). Immediately place warm nuts in a food processor (a blender is not recommended). Process 10 to 15 minutes or until thick and spreadable, scraping sides occasionally.* Nuts will look dry and crumbly the first 5 minutes of processing but will come together into nut butter with longer processing. Add salt (if using); process an additional 30 seconds.

2. Transfer nut butter to an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator up to 1 month. Let refrigerated nut butter stand at room temperature to soften before using. **Makes 1 cup.**

***TIP** If processor starts to overheat (feels or smells hot), stop and let it cool about 3 minutes then continue.

PER TBSP. *103 cal., 9 g fat (1 g sat. fat), 0 mg chol., 0 mg sodium, 4 g carb., 2 g fiber, 1 g sugars, 4 g pro.*

PROCESS TIMES

ALMONDS
15 minutes

CASHEWS
15 minutes

PECANS
10 minutes

The textures of the nut butters will vary depending on the type of nut. Cashew butter is a thick paste which sets up after chilling. Pecan butter is thin and doesn't thicken much when chilled. Almond butter and sunflower butter are thin but spreadable after processing. They thicken a bit when chilled.

Pecan BUTTER TURTLE BARS

PREP 20 minutes
BAKE 20 minutes at 350°F

	Nonstick cooking spray
2	**cups all-purpose flour**
1⅔	**cups packed brown sugar**
⅓	**cup butter, softened**
⅓	**cup + ¼ cup pecan butter** *(p. 93)*
1½	**cups whole pecans, toasted**
½	**cup butter**
¼	**cup heavy cream**
1½	**cups milk chocolate chips**
½	**cup chopped toasted pecans**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 13×9-inch baking pan with foil, extending foil over edges. Coat foil with cooking spray. For crust, in a large bowl combine flour and 1 cup of the brown sugar. Add the softened butter and ⅓ cup of the pecan butter; cut in with a pastry blender until crumbly. Press mixture into bottom of prepared pan. Sprinkle with whole pecans.
2. In a medium saucepan combine the ½ cup butter and the remaining ⅔ cup brown sugar and ¼ cup pecan butter. Heat and stir over medium until butter melts. Bring to boiling, whisking frequently. Whisk in cream. Keep whisking until mixture thickens and comes to a boil across surface. Immediately pour evenly over crust and pecans.
3. Bake about 20 minutes or until caramel is bubbling across the surface. Cool on a wire rack 5 minutes. Sprinkle with the chocolate chips and chopped pecans. Cool completely.
4. Use foil to lift out uncut bars. Cut into bars. **Makes 32 bars.**

PER BAR *242 cal., 16 g fat (6 g sat. fat), 19 mg chol., 49 mg sodium, 25 g carb., 2 g fiber, 18 g sugars, 3 g pro.*

recipes

BAR COOKIES
59 Brown Sugar Pie Bars
23 Cannoli Bars
22 Cashew Blossom Bars
21 Cinnamon Roll Cheesecake Bars
83 Coffee Cookie Bars
25 Dutch Letter Bars
24 Gingerbread Cookie Bars
58 Gooey Butter Cake Squares
58 Lemon Chess Pie Bars
77 Paloma Bars
58 Peaches and Cream Bars
94 Pecan Butter Turtle Bars
49 Pecan Pie Bars
23 Triple Chocolate Cream Pie Bars

CUTOUT COOKIES
87 4-Square Cutouts
92 Almond Butter Shortbread
63 Browned Butter Cardamom Pepparkakor
29 Chocolate Chai Cookies
75 Citrus Rumchata Biscochitos
37 Everything Shortbread
40 Maple Cutout Cookies
29 Pumpkin Cookies with Candied Pepitas
76 Spiced Polvorones

DRINKS
29 Hot Chocolate Bombs
28 Pumpkin Eggnog

DROP COOKIES
73 Basic Drop Cookie Dough
59 Berger of Baltimore Cookies
59 Buckeye Cookies
57 Giant Gooey Chocolate Chip Cookies
57 Mississippi Mud Cookies
50 Ore-gone Trail Cookies

FILLINGS, FROSTINGS, ICINGS & TOPPINGS
28 Candied Pepitas
65 Caramel Drizzle
47 Chocolate Ganache
19 Cream Cheese Icing
59 Fudge Frosting
37 Homemade Everything Seasoning
93 Homemade Nut Butter
40 Maple Frosting
59 Marshmallow Filling
47 Pastry Cream
7 Powdered Sugar Icing
63 Royal Icing

NO-BAKE COOKIES, BARS & CANDIES
11 Black and White Cookie Dough Bars
11 Browned Butter Cookie Dough Bars
11 Cake Batter Cookie Dough Bars
10 Cake Batter Puppy Chow Bars
13 Candy Cane Swirl Fudge
11 Chocolate-Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Bars
11 Monster Cookie Dough Bars
11 Peanut Butter Cup Cookie Dough Bars
12 Popcorn Ball Pops
12 S'mores Popcorn Balls
9 Sugar Plums

SANDWICH COOKIES
47 Boston Cream Pielettes
84 Dark Chocolate Rounds with Espresso Buttercream
59 Wicked Good Whoopie Pies

SHAPED COOKIES
91 Cashew Butter Cookies
79 Chocolate-Ancho Crinkles
82 Dalgona Coffee Tarts
57 Huckleberry Jam Thumbprint Cookies
65 Jumbo Carmelita Cookies
78 Masa Harina Thumbprints with Cajeta
37 Manchego Thumbprints with Fig Preserves
67 Mint-Stuffed Dark Chocolate Cookies
84 Peppermint White Hot Chocolate Thumbprints
84 Pumpkin Spice Latte Chewy Sugar Cookies
7 Rich Butter Spritz Wreaths
69 Stuffed Confetti Cookies

SLICED COOKIES
37 Blue Cheese and Dried Cherry Oatmeal Cookies
33 Browned Butter Ginger Biscotti
18 Chocolate Babka Spirals
33 Cinnamon-Nut Biscotti
18 Orange Cream Spirals
33 Pumpkin Biscotti
19 Pumpkin Spice Spirals
18 Red and Green Pinwheels
58 Ruby Red Grapefruit Shortbread Cookies
18 Walnut Potica Spirals

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COOKIE BASICS

FOLLOW THESE TRIED-AND-TRUE TIPS FOR COOKIE SUCCESS EVERY TIME.

SCOOPED
Use a small cookie scoop for perfectly proportioned cookies. Or use two regular spoons—scoop dough with one spoon and use the other to push it onto a cookie sheet. Each portion should approximate a 1-inch ball.

Line cookie sheets with parchment paper for easy cookie removal and speedy cleanup—no greasing needed. Plus, you can scoop more dough onto extra paper while baking a batch of cookies. Slide paper with baked cookies off the sheet and slide a new one on.

COOKIE SUCCESS = READ THE RECIPE ALL THE WAY THROUGH, MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE INGREDIENTS IN THE RECIPE, AND THEN HAVE EVERYTHING READY TO GO BEFORE YOU START.

COOKIE SHEETS VS. BAKING PANS

♦ **A COOKIE SHEET** has one or two raised sides to make them easy to pick up. This allows hot air to circulate all around shallow cookies for even baking. These are what our Test Kitchen uses to bake cookies.

♦ **BAKING PANS** have four raised sides. These are used for baking bars. Always use the dimensions called for in the recipe.

♦ **USE** light- to medium-color pans. Dark pans can cause cookies to overbrown or burn. Use sturdy, heavyweight cookie sheets and pans for baking.

♦ **INSULATED COOKIE SHEETS** increase baking times and cause cookies to spread more. They were not used to test these recipes.

STORE IT RIGHT!

Below is general storage information for most cookies and bars. If storing for long periods or freezing, avoid filling or decorating cookies until you're ready to serve. When refrigeration is required for certain bars or cookies, specific storage information is given in individual recipes.

MULTI-LAYER STORAGE

Layer unfrosted bars and cookies, sturdy cookies, and cookies with firm-set icing between sheets of parchment paper in an airtight container. Store at room temperature or refrigerate (if necessary; info, *right*) up to 3 days or freeze up to 3 months. Thaw cookies if frozen and decorate as directed in recipes.

SINGLE-LAYER STORAGE

Place brownies, soft bars, and cookies with sticky toppings or frosting in a single layer in an airtight container. Store at room temperature or in the refrigerator (if directed in the recipe) up to 3 days or freeze up to 3 months.

REFRIGERATOR STORAGE

Refrigerate cookies with these features:

- Caramel- and chocolate-base frostings and fillings
- Nougat or gooey fillings that benefit from firming
- Frostings and fillings containing sour cream, cream cheese, or butter
- Custard and cheesecake fillings

DON'T FREEZE THESE

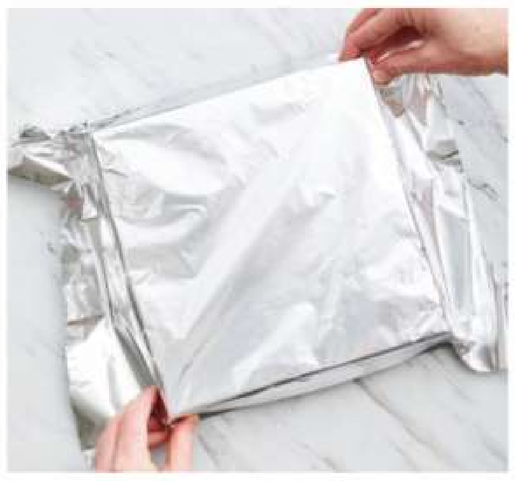
- Meringue and macaron batters
- Caramel toppings and fillings
- Brownie and bar batters
- Bars with custardlike fillings (such as Paloma Bars, *p. 77*, and Lemon Chess Pie Bars, *p. 58*)

NO BUTTERMILK? NO PROBLEM.

Buttermilk and sour milk are used interchangeably in cooking. If you don't have buttermilk on hand, make sour milk. For each 1 cup sour milk, add 1 Tbsp. lemon juice or white vinegar to a liquid measuring cup. Add enough milk to make 1 cup total liquid. Stir; let stand 5 minutes before using.

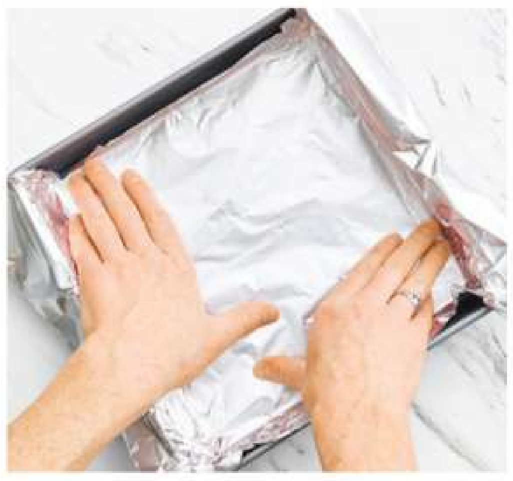
REMOVING BARS

Line baking pans with foil before baking. This makes it easy to lift baked bars out of the pan and transfer them to a cutting board for even cutting.



1

Tear a piece of foil larger than the pan. Flip the pan over. Shape foil around pan bottom, folding the foil smoothly around corners.



2

Turn pan right side up; fit shaped foil inside. Leave some overhang to help lift cooled bars from pan. Grease foil if recipe calls for a greased pan.

PREP YOUR BUTTER

Our Test Kitchen uses salted butter when testing unless otherwise noted. If you prefer unsalted butter, add ¼ tsp. salt per ½ cup butter used.

MELTED BUTTER

To melt butter, place it in a liquid measuring cup and microwave 10 seconds at a time until melted.

SOFTENED BUTTER

Softened butter is easier to cream with sugar than cold butter. Let it stand at room temperature at least 30 minutes to soften. If you need it quicker, microwave unwrapped butter on defrost/thaw setting 15 seconds at a time until spreadable.

COLD BUTTER

Cold butter is used most often in shortbread cookies. It is cut into flour with a pastry blender, creating flaky layers as the cookies bake.

ALL ABOUT LEAVENING

Most cookies and bars need a leavening agent to make them light and soft. They don't all work the same way, so don't swap one for the other. You'll get noticeable differences in flavor, texture, and appearance if you do.

BAKING SODA

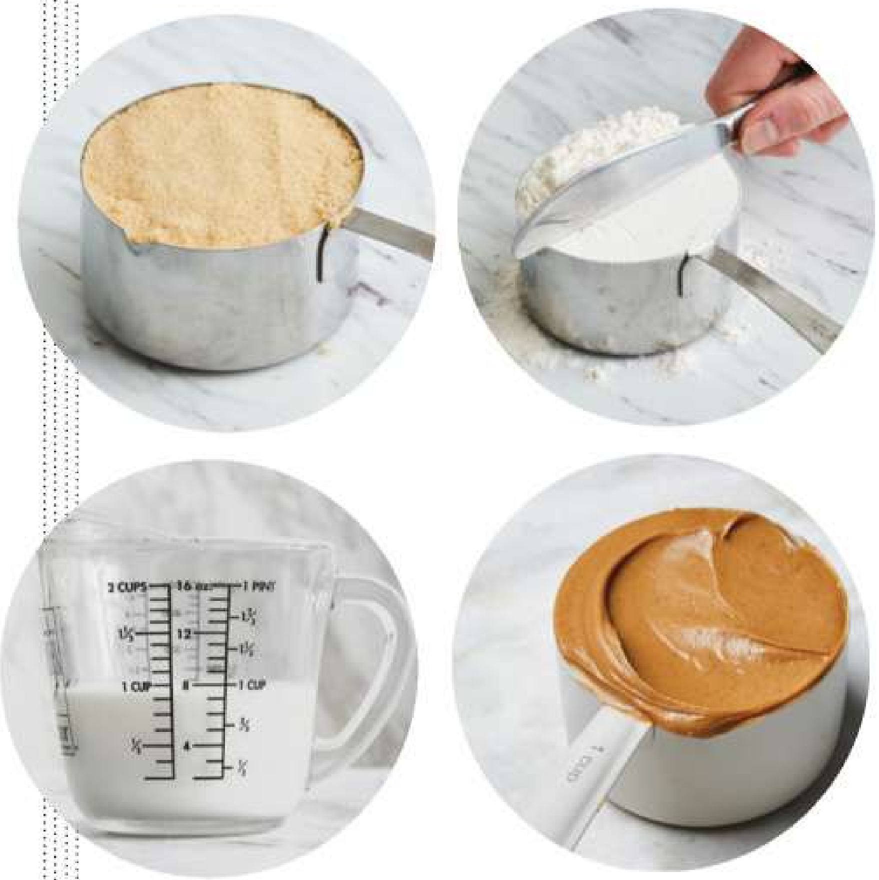
Baking soda is used when a recipe has an acidic ingredient, such as brown sugar or buttermilk. Alkaline baking soda reacts with the acid to do its thing.

BAKING POWDER

Baking powder contains both acidic and alkaline ingredients, so it's used when there is no acidic ingredient in a recipe.

CREAM OF TARTAR

Some old-fashioned cookies call for both baking soda and cream of tartar (a dry acidic ingredient). This combo is essentially a homemade baking powder. The ratio of baking soda to cream of tartar is specific to each recipe depending on acidity of other ingredients used.



FOR GOOD MEASURE

Baking recipes have relatively strict formulation, so correctly measuring ingredients matters.

♦ **BROWN SUGAR** Use a dry measuring cup. Spoon brown sugar into cup. Use a spoon to pack it into the cup firmly even with the top of the cup.

♦ **FLOUR** Use a light hand when measuring flour. Stir the flour in the canister to fluff it. Use a spoon to transfer flour into a dry measuring cup until it is overflowing. Level the top with a table knife (photo, *above*). Scooping flour with the measuring cup or shaking the cup to level causes flour to pack down, increasing the total amount of flour (which results in dry cookies).

♦ **LIQUID MEASURING** Use a liquid measuring cup for measuring liquids. When filling, get down to eye level with the cup and stop when you get to the correct measuring line.

♦ **PEANUT BUTTER/ SHORTENING** Use a spatula to scoop peanut butter or shortening into a dry measuring cup. (For sticky peanut butter, coat the cup with nonstick cooking spray first.) Press down to fill any air pockets. Level with a spatula.

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